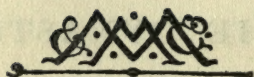


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THE DYNASTS



THE DYNASTS

A DRAMA

OF THE NAPOLEONIC WARS,
IN THREE PARTS, NINETEEN
ACTS, & ONE HUNDRED AND
THIRTY SCENES

BY

THOMAS HARDY

PART FIRST

*And I heard sounds of insult, shame, and wrong,
And trumpets blown for wars.*

London

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PREFACE

THE Drama here presented is concerned with the Great Historical Calamity, or Clash of Peoples, artificially brought about some hundred years ago.

The choice of such a subject was mainly due to three accidents of locality. It chanced that the writer was familiar with a part of England that lay within hail of the watering-place in which King George the Third had his favourite summer residence during the war with the first Napoléon, and where he was visited by ministers and others who bore the weight of English affairs on their more or less competent shoulders at that stressful time. Secondly, this district, being also near the coast which had echoed with rumours of invasion in their intensest form while the descent threatened, was formerly animated by memories and traditions of the

desperate military preparations for that contingency. Thirdly, the same countryside happened to include the village which was the birthplace of Nelson's flag-captain at Trafalgar.

When, as the first published result of these accidents, *The Trumpet-Major* was printed, more than twenty years ago, I found myself in the tantalizing position of having touched the fringe of a vast international tragedy without being able, through limits of plan, knowledge, and opportunity, to enter further into its events; a restriction that prevailed for many years. But the provokingly slight regard paid to English influence and action throughout the struggle by those Continental writers who had dealt imaginatively with Napoléon's career, seemed always to leave room for a new handling of the theme which should re-embody the features of this influence in their true proportion; and accordingly, on a belated day about six years back, the following play was outlined, to be taken up now and then at wide intervals ever since.

It may, I think, claim at least a tolerable fidelity to the facts of its date as they are

given in ordinary records. Whenever any evidence of the words really spoken or written by the characters in their various situations was attainable, as close a paraphrase has been aimed at as was compatible with the form chosen. And in all cases outside oral tradition, accessible scenery, and existing relics, my indebtedness for detail to the abundant pages of the historian, the biographer, and the journalist, English and foreign, has been, of course, continuous.¹

It was thought proper to introduce, as supernatural spectators of the terrestrial drama, certain impersonated abstractions, or Intelligences, called Spirits. They are intended to be taken by the reader for what they may be worth as contrivances of the fancy merely. Their doctrines are but tentative, and are advanced with little eye to a systematized philosophy warranted to lift "the burthen of the mystery" of this unintelligible world. The chief thing hoped for them is that they and their utterances may have dramatic plausibility enough to procure for them, in the words of Coleridge, "that

¹ It is intended to give a list of the chief authorities at the end of the Third Part.

willing suspension of disbelief for the moment which constitutes poetic faith." The wide prevalence of the Monistic theory of the Universe forbade, in this twentieth century, the importation of Divine personages from any antique Mythology as ready-made sources or channels of Causation, even in verse, and excluded the celestial machinery of, say, *Paradise Lost*, as peremptorily as that of the *Iliad* or the *Eddas*. And the abandonment of the masculine pronoun in allusions to the First or Fundamental Energy seemed a necessary and logical consequence of the long abandonment by thinkers of the anthropomorphic conception of the same.

These phantasmal Intelligences are divided into groups, of which one only—that of the Pities—approximates to "the Universal Sympathy of human nature—the spectator idealized"¹ of the Greek Chorus, the remainder being eclectically chosen auxiliaries whose signification may be readily discerned. In point of literary form, the scheme of contrasted Choruses and other conventions of this external feature was shaped with a single view to the modern expression of a

¹ Schlegel.

modern outlook, and in frank divergence from classical and other dramatic precedent which ruled the ancient voicings of ancient themes.

It may hardly be necessary to inform readers that in devising this chronicle-piece no attempt has been made to create that completely organic structure of action, and closely-webbed development of character and motive, which are demanded in a drama strictly self-contained. A panoramic show like the present is a series of historical "ordinates" (to use a term in geometry): the subject is familiar to all; and foreknowledge is assumed to fill in the curves required to combine the whole gaunt framework into an artistic unity. The spectator, in thought, becomes a performer whenever called upon, and cheerfully makes himself the utility-man of the gaps. Should he refuse to do this, a historical presentment on an intermittent plan, in which the *dramatis personæ* number some hundreds, exclusive of crowds and armies, becomes in his individual case unsuitable.

In this assumption of a completion of the story by those to whom the drama is addressed, it is interesting, if unnecessary, to name an exemplar as old as Aeschylus, whose

plays are, as Professor Verrall reminds us,¹ scenes from stories taken as known, and would be unintelligible without supplementary scenes of the imagination.

Readers will readily discern, too, that *The Dynasts* is a play intended simply for mental performance, and not for the stage. Some critics have averred that to declare a drama as being not for the stage is to make an announcement whose subject and predicate cancel each other. The question seems to be an unimportant matter of terminology. Compositions cast in this shape were, without doubt, originally written for the stage only, and as a consequence their nomenclature of "Act," "Scene," and the like, was drawn directly from the vehicle of representation. But in the course of time such a shape would reveal itself to be an eminently readable one; moreover, by dispensing with the theatre altogether, a freedom of treatment was attainable in this form that was denied where the material possibilities of stagery had to be rigorously remembered. With the careless mechanicism of human speech, the technicalities of practical mumming were retained in these

¹ Introduction to the *Choephori*.

productions when they had ceased to be concerned with the stage at all.

To say, then, in the present case, that a writing in play-shape is not to be played, is merely another way of stating that such writing has been done in a form for which there chances to be no brief definition save one already in use for works that it superficially but not entirely resembles.

Whether mental performance alone may not eventually be the fate of all drama other than that of contemporary or frivolous life, is a kindred question not without interest. The mind naturally flies to the triumphs of the Hellenic and Elizabethan theatre in exhibiting scenes laid "far in the Unapparent," and asks why they should not be repeated. But the meditative world is older, more invidious, more nervous, more quizzical, than it once was, and being unhappily perplexed by—

Riddles of Death Thebes never knew,

may be less ready and less able than Hellas and old England were to look through the insistent, and often grotesque, substance at the thing signified.

A practicable compromise may conceivably result, taking the shape of a monotonic delivery of speeches, with dreamy conventional gestures, something in the manner traditionally maintained by the old Christmas mummers, the curiously hypnotizing impressiveness of whose automatic style—that of persons who spoke by no will of their own—will be remembered by all who ever experienced it. Gauzes or screens to blur outlines might still further shut off the actual. But on this branch of the subject the present writer is unqualified to speak.

T. H.

September 1903.

THE DYNASTS

PART FIRST



CONTENTS OF THE FIRST PART

	PAGE
PREFACE	V
CHARACTERS	xix
FORE SCENE. THE OVERWORLD	I

ACT FIRST :—

Scene I. A Ridge in Wessex	12
„ II. Paris. Office of the Minister of Marine	19
„ III. London. The Old House of Com- mons	25
„ IV. The Harbour of Boulogne	43
„ V. London. The House of a Lady of Quality	44
„ VI. Milan. The Cathedral	50

ACT SECOND :—

Scene I. The Dockyard, Gibraltar	59
„ II. Off Ferrol	64
„ III. The Camp and Harbour of Boulogne	68
„ IV. South Wessex. An Open Down	73
„ V. The Same. Rainbarrows' Beacon	77

ACT THIRD :—

PAGE

Scene I. Boulogne. The Château at Pont-de-Briques	92
„ II. The Frontiers of Upper Austria and Bavaria	101
„ III. Boulogne. The St. Omer Road	103

ACT FOURTH :—

Scene I. King George's Watering-place, South Wessex	104
„ II. Before the City of Ulm	112
„ III. Ulm. Within the City	113
„ IV. Before Ulm. The same day	122
„ V. The Same. The Michaelsberg	123
„ VI. London. Spring Gardens	127

ACT FIFTH :—

Scene I. Off Cape Trafalgar. The Combined Squadrons	134
„ II. The Same. The Quarter-deck of the "Victory"	140
„ III. The Same. The "Bucentaure"	148
„ IV. The Same. The Cockpit of the "Victory"	153
„ V. London. The Guildhall	167
„ VI. An Inn at Rennes	173
„ VII. King George's Watering-place, South Wessex	176

ACT SIXTH :—

Scene I. The Field of Austerlitz. The French position	181
---	-----

CONTENTS

xvii

ACT SIXTH (*continued*) :—

	PAGE
Scene II. The Same. The Russian position	188
„ III. The Same. The French position	192
„ IV. The Same. The Russian position	199
„ V. The Same. Near the Windmill of Paleny	202
„ VI. Shockerwick House, near Bath .	209
„ VII. Paris. A Street leading to the Tuileries	213
„ VIII. Putney. Bowling Green House	222

CHARACTERS OF PART FIRST

I. PHANTOM INTELLIGENCES

{ THE ANCIENT SPIRIT OF THE YEARS.
{ CHORUS OF THE YEARS.

{ THE SPIRIT OF THE PITIES.
{ CHORUS OF THE PITIES.

{ SPIRITS SINISTER AND IRONIC.
{ CHORUSES OF SINISTER AND IRONIC SPIRITS.

{ THE SPIRIT OF RUMOUR.
{ CHORUS OF RUMOURS.

THE SHADE OF THE EARTH.

SPIRIT-MESSENGERS.

RECORDING ANGELS.

II. PERSONS OF THE DRAMA

The names printed in italics are those of mute figures only.

MEN

GEORGE THE THIRD.
The Duke of Cumberland.

PITT.

FOX.

SHERIDAN.

WINDHAM.

WHITBREAD.

TIERNEY.

BATHURST AND FULLER.

Lord Chancellor Eldon.

EARL OF MALMESBURY.

LORD MULGRAVE.

ANOTHER CABINET MINISTER.

Lord Grenville.

Viscount Castlereagh.

Viscount Sidmouth.

ANOTHER NOBLE LORD.

ROSE.

Canning.

Perceval.

Grey.

Speaker Abbot.

TOMLINE, BISHOP OF LINCOLN.

SIR WALTER FARQUHAR.

Count Munster.

Other Peers, Ministers, ex-Ministers, Members of Parliament, and Persons of Quality.

NELSON.

COLLINGWOOD.

HARDY.

SECRETARY SCOTT.

DR. BEATTY.

DR. MAGRATH.

DR. ALEXANDER SCOTT.

BURKE, PURSER.

Lieutenant Pasco.

ANOTHER LIEUTENANT.

POLLARD, A MIDSHIPMAN.

ANOTHER MIDSHIPMAN.

Captain Adair.

Lieutenants Ram and Whipple.

Other English Naval Officers.

Sergeant-Major Secker and Marines.

*Staff and other Officers of the
English Army.*

A COMPANY OF SOLDIERS.

*Regiments of the English Army
and Hanoverian.*

SAILORS AND BOATMEN.

A MILITIAMAN.

Naval crews.

*The Lord Mayor and Corpora-
tion of London.*

A GENTLEMAN OF FASHION.

WILTSHIRE, A COUNTRY
GENTLEMAN.

A HORSEMAN.

TWO BEACON-WATCHERS.

ENGLISH CITIZENS AND BUR-
GESSES.

COACH AND OTHER HIGHWAY
PASSENGERS.

MESSENGERS, SERVANTS, AND
RUSTICS.

NAPOLÉON BONAPARTE.

DECRÈS.

DARU.

MONGE, A PHILOSOPHER.

BERTHIER.

MURAT.

SOULT.

NEY.

LANNES.

Bernadotte.

Marmont.

Dupont.

Oudinot.

Davoust.

Vandamme.

Other French Marshals.

A SUB-OFFICER.

VILLENEUVE.

LAURISTON.

FLAG-CAPTAIN MAGENDIE.

LIEUTENANT DAUDIGNON.

LIEUTENANT FOURNIER.

DE PRIGNY, HEAD OF STAFF.

Captain Lucas.

OTHER FRENCH NAVAL
OFFICERS AND PETTY
OFFICERS.

*Seamen of the French and
Spanish Navies.*

Regiments of the French Army.

COURIERS.

HERALDS.

Aides, Officials, Pages, etc.

ATTENDANTS.

French Citizens.

CARDINAL CAPRARA.

*Priests, Acolyths, and Choris-
ters.*

*Italian Doctors and Presidents
of Institutions.*

Milanese Citizens.

THE EMPEROR FRANCIS.

The Emperor Alexander.

THE ARCHDUKE FERDINAND.

Prince John of Lichtenstein.

PRINCE SCHWARZENBERG.

MACK.
 JELLACHICH.
 RIESC.
 WEIROTHER.
 ANOTHER AUSTRIAN GENERAL.
 TWO AUSTRIAN OFFICERS.

PRINCE KUTÚZOF.
 COUNT LANGERON.

COUNT BUXHÖVDEN.
 COUNT MILORÁDOVICH.
 DOKHTÓROF.

*Giulay, Gottesheim, Klenau,
 and Prschebiszewsky.
 Regiments of the Austrian
 Army.
 Regiments of the Russian Army.*

WOMEN

*Queen Charlotte.
 English Princesses.
 Ladies of the English Court.*
 LADY HESTER STANHOPE.
 A LADY.
*Lady Caroline Lamb, Mrs.
 Damer, and other English
 Ladies.*

THE EMPRESS JOSÉPHINE.
*Princesses and Ladies of
 Joséphine's Court.
 Seven Milanese Young Ladies.*

*City- and Towns-women.
 Country-women.
 A MILITIAMAN'S WIFE.
 A STREET-WOMAN.
 Ship-women.
 Servants.*

FORE SCENE

THE OVERWORLD

Enter the Ancient Spirit and Chorus of the Years,
the Spirit and Chorus of the Pities, the Shade of the
Earth, the Spirits Sinister and Ironical with their Choruses,
Rumours, Spirit-Messengers, and Recording Angels.

SHADE OF THE EARTH

What of the Immanent Will and Its designs?

SPIRIT OF THE YEARS

*It works unconsciously, as heretofore,
Eternal artistries in Circumstance,
Whose patterns, wrought by rapt æsthetic rote,
Seem in themselves Its single listless aim,
And not their consequence.*

CHORUS OF THE PITIES (aerial music)

*Still thus? Still thus?
Ever unconscious!*

*An automatic sense
Unweeting why or whence?
Then be the inevitable, as of old,
Although that so it be we dare not hold!*

SPIRIT OF THE YEARS

*Hold what you list, fond unbelieving Sprites,
You cannot swerve the pulsion of the Byss,
Which thinking on, yet weighing not Its thought,
Unchecks Its clock-like laws.*

SPIRIT SINISTER (aside)

*Good, as before.
My little engines, then, will still have play.*

SPIRIT OF THE PITIES

*Why doth It so and so, and ever so,
This viewless, voiceless Turner of the Wheel?*

SPIRIT OF THE YEARS

*As one sad story runs, It lends Its heed
To other worlds, being wearied out with this;
Wherefore Its mindlessness of earthly woes.
Some, too, have told at whiles that rightfully
Its warefulness, Its care, this planet lost
When in her early growth and crudity
By bad mad acts of severance men contrived,
Working such nescience by their own device.—
At least, so stands it in some chronicles,
Though not in mine.*

SPIRIT OF THE PITIES

*Meet is it, none the less,
To bear in thought that though Its consciousness
May be estranged, engrossed afar, or sealed,
Sublunar shocks may wake Its watch anon ?*

SPIRIT OF THE YEARS

*Nay. In the Foretime, even to the germ of
Being,
Nothing appears of shape to indicate
That cognizance has marshalled things terrene,
Or will (such is my thinking) in my span.
Rather they show that, like a knitter drowsed,
Whose fingers play in skilled unmindfulness,
The Will has woven with an absent heed
Since life first was ; and ever will so weave.*

SPIRIT SINISTER

*Hence we've rare dramas going—more so since
It wove Its web in that Ajaccian womb !*

SPIRIT OF THE YEARS

*Well, no more thus on what no mind can mete.
Our scope is but to register and watch
By means of this great gift accorded us—
The free trajection of our entities.*

SPIRIT OF THE PITIES

*On things terrene, then, I would say that though
The human news wherewith the Rumours
stirred us*

*May please thy temper, Years, 'twere better far
Such deeds were nulled, and this strange man's
career*

*Wound up, as making inharmonious jars
In her creation whose meek wraith we know.
The more that he, turned man of mere traditions,
Now profits naught. For the large potencies
Instilled into his idiosyncrasy—
To throne fair Liberty in Privilege' room—
Are taking taint, and sink to common plots
For his own gain.*

SHADE OF THE EARTH

*And who, then, Cordial One,
Wouldst substitute for this Intractable?*

CHORUS OF THE PITIES (aerial music)

*We would establish those of kindlier build,
In fair Compassions skilled,
Men of deep art in life-development;
Watchers and warders of thy varied lands,
Men surfeited of laying heavy hands
Upon the innocent,
The mild, the fragile, the obscure content
Among the myriads of thy family.*

*Those, too, who love the true, the excellent,
And make their daily moves a melody.*

SHADE OF THE EARTH

*They may come, will they. I am not averse.
Yet know I am but the ineffectual Shade
Of her the Travailler, herself a thrall
To It; in all her labourings curbed and kinged!*

SPIRIT OF THE YEARS

*Shall such be mooted now? Already change
Hath played strange pranks since first I brooded
here.
But old Laws operate yet; and phase and
phase
Of men's dynastic and imperial moils
Shape on accustomed lines. Though, as for me,
I care not how they shape, or what they be.*

SPIRIT OF THE PITIES

You seem to have small sense of mercy, Sire?

SPIRIT OF THE YEARS

*Mercy? I view, not urge; nor more than
mark
What designate your titles Good and Ill.
'Tis not in me to feel with, or against,
These flesh-hinged mannikins Its hand upwinds
To click-clack off Its preadjusted laws;*

*But only through my centuries to behold
Their aspects, and their movements, and their
mould.*

SPIRIT OF THE PITIES

*They are shapes that bleed, mere marionettes or no,
And each has parcel in the total Will.*

SPIRIT OF THE YEARS

*Which overrides them as a whole its parts
In other entities.*

SPIRIT SINISTER (aside)

*Limbs of Itself:
Each one a jot of It in quaint disguise?
I'll fear all men henceforward!*

SPIRIT OF THE PITIES

Go to. Let this terrestrial tragedy—

SPIRIT IRONIC

Nay, comedy—

SPIRIT OF THE PITIES

*Let this earth-tragedy
Whereof ye spake, afford a spectacle
Forthwith conned closelier than your custom is.—*

SPIRIT OF THE YEARS

*How does it stand? (To a Recording Angel)
Open and chant the page*

*Thou'st lately writ, that sums these happenings,
In brief reminder of their instant points
Slighted by us amid our converse here.*

RECORDING ANGEL (from a book, in recitative)

*Now mellow-eyed Peace is made captive,
And Vengeance is chartered
To deal forth its dooms on the Peoples
With sword and with spear.*

*Men's musings are busy with forecasts
Of musters and battle,
And visions of shock and disaster
Rise red on the year.*

*The easternmost ruler sits wistful,
And tense he to midward ;
The King to the west mans his borders
In front and in the rear.*

*While one they eye, flushed from his crowning,
Ranks legions around him
To shake the enisled neighbour nation
And close her career !*

SEMICHORUS I. OF RUMOURS (aerial music)

*O woven-winged squadrons of Toulon
And fellows of Rochefort,
Wait, wait for a wind, and draw westward
Ere Nelson be near !*

*For he reads not your force, or your freightage
Of warriors fell-handed,
Or when they will join for the onset,
Or whither they steer !*

SEMICHORUS II

*O Nelson, so zealous a watcher
Through months-long of cruizing,
Thy foes may elude thee a moment,
Put forth, and get clear ;
And rendezvous westerly straightway
With Spain's aiding navies,
And hasten to head violation
Of Albion's frontier !*

SPIRIT OF THE YEARS

*Methinks too much assurance thrills your note
On secrets in my locker, gentle sprites ;
But it may serve.—Our thought being now
reflexed
To forces operant on this English isle,
Behoves it us to enter scene by scene,
And watch the spectacle of Europe's moves
In her embroil, as they were self-ordained
According to the naïve and liberal creed
Of our great-hearted young Compassionates,
Forgetting the Prime Mover of the gear
As puppet-watchers him who pulls the strings.—*

*You'll mark the twitchings of this Bonaparte
As he with other figures foots his reel,
Until he twitch him into his lonely grave :
Also regard the frail ones that his flings
Have made gyrate like animalcula
In tepid pools.—Hence to the precinct, then,
And count as framework to the stagery
Yon architraves of sunbeam-smitten cloud.—
So may ye judge Earth's jackaclocks to be
Not fugled by one Will, but function-free.*

The nether sky opens, and Europe is disclosed as a prone and emaciated figure, the Alps shaping like a backbone, and the branching mountain-chains like ribs, the peninsular plateau of Spain forming a head. Broad and lengthy lowlands stretch from the north of France across Russia like a grey-green garment hemmed by the Ural mountains and the glistening Arctic Ocean.

The point of view then sinks downwards through space, and draws near to the surface of the perturbed countries, where the peoples, distressed by events which they did not cause, are seen writhing, crawling, heaving, and vibrating in their various cities and nationalities.

SPIRIT OF THE YEARS (to the Spirit of the Pities)

*As key-scene to the whole, I first lay bare
The Will-webs of thy fearful questioning ;
For know that of my antique privileges
This gift to visualize the Mode is one
(Though by exhaustive strain and effort only).
See, then, and learn, ere my power pass again.*

A new and penetrating light descends on the spectacle, enduing men and things with a seeming transparency, and exhibiting as one organism the anatomy of life and movement in all humanity and vitalized matter included in the display.

SPIRIT OF THE PITIES (after a pause)

*Amid this scene of bodies substantive
Strange waves I sight like winds grown visible,
Which bear men's forms on their innumerable
coils,
Twining and serpentining round and through.
Also retracting threads like gossamers—
Except in being irresistible—
Which complicate with some, and balance all.*

SPIRIT OF THE YEARS

*These are the Prime Volitions,—fibrils, veins,
Will-tissues, nerves, and pulses of the Cause,
That heave throughout the Earth's compositure.
Their sum is like the lobule of a Brain
Evolving always that it wots not of;
A Brain whose whole connotes the Everywhere,
And whose procedure may but be discerned
By phantom eyes like ours; the while un-
guessed
Of those it stirs, who (even as ye do) dream
Their motions free, their orderings supreme;
Each life apart from each, with power to mete
Its own day's measures; balanced, self-complete;*

*Though they subsist but atoms of the One
Labouring through all, divisible from none;
But this no further now. Deem yet man's
deeds self-done.*

The anatomy of the Immanent Will disappears.

GENERAL CHORUS OF INTELLIGENCES
(aerial music)

*We'll close up Time, as a bird its van,
We'll traverse Space, as spirits can,
Link pulses severed by leagues and years,
Bring cradles into touch with biers ;
So that the far-off Consequence appears
Prompt at the heel of foregone Cause.—
The PRIME, that willed ere wareness was,
Whose Brain perchance is Space, whose Thought
its laws,
Which we as threads and streams discern,
We may but muse on, never learn.*

1

END OF THE FORE SCENE

ACT FIRST

SCENE I

ENGLAND. A RIDGE IN WESSEX

The time is a fine day in March, 1805. A highway crosses the ridge, which is near the sea, and the south coast is seen bounding the landscape below, the open Channel extending beyond.

SPIRIT OF THE YEARS

*Hark now, and gather how the martial mood
Stirs England's humblest hearts. Anon we'll
trace
Its heavings in the upper coteries there.*

SPIRIT SINISTER

*Ay; begin small, and so lead up to the
greater. It is a sound dramatic principle. I
always aim to follow it in my pestilences, fires,
famines, and other comedies. And though, to
be sure, I did not in my Lisbon earthquake, I
did in my French Terror, and my St. Domingo
burlesque.*

SPIRIT OF THE YEARS

THY Lisbon earthquake, THY French Terror.

Wait.

Thinking thou will'st, thou dost but indicate.

A stage-coach enters, with passengers outside. Their voices after the foregoing sound thin and small, as from another medium.

FIRST PASSENGER

There seems to be a deal of traffic over Ridgeway, even at this time o' year.

SECOND PASSENGER

Yes. It is because the King and Court are coming down here later on. They wake up this part rarely. . . . See, now, how the Channel and coast open out like a chart. That patch of mist below us is the town we are bound for. There's the Isle of Slingers beyond, like a floating snail. That wide bay on the right is where the "Abergavenny," Captain John Wordsworth, was wrecked last month. One can see half across to France up here.

FIRST PASSENGER

Half across. And then another little half, and then all that's behind—the Corsican mischief!

SECOND PASSENGER

Yes. People who live hereabout—I am a native of these parts—feel the nearness of France more than they do inland.

FIRST PASSENGER

That's why we have seen so many of these marching regiments on the road. This year his grandest attempt upon us is to be made, I reckon.

SECOND PASSENGER

May we be ready!

FIRST PASSENGER

Well, we ought to be. We've had alarms enough, God knows.

THIRD PASSENGER

I much doubt his intention to come at all.

Some companies of infantry are seen ahead, and the coach presently overtakes them.

SOLDIERS (singing as they walk)

We be the King's men, hale and hearty,
Marching to meet one Buonaparty;
If he won't sail, lest the wind should blow,
We shall have marched for nothing, O!
Right fol-lol!

We be the King's men, hale and hearty,
Marching to meet one Buonaparty ;
If he be sea-sick, says " No, no ! "
We shall have marched for nothing, O !
Right fol-lol !

The soldiers draw aside, and the coach passes on.

SECOND PASSENGER

Is there truth in it that Bonaparte wrote
a letter to the King last month ?

FIRST PASSENGER

Yes, sir. A letter in his own hand, in
which he expected the King to reply to him
in the same manner.

SOLDIERS (continuing, as they are left behind)

We be the King's men, hale and hearty,
Marching to meet one Buonaparty ;
Never mind, mates ; we'll be merry, though
We may have marched for nothing, O !
Right fol-lol !

THIRD PASSENGER

And was Boney's letter friendly ?

FIRST PASSENGER

Certainly, sir. He requested peace with
the King.

THIRD PASSENGER

And why shouldn't the King reply in the same manner?

FIRST PASSENGER

What! Encourage this man in an act of shameless presumption, and give him the pleasure of considering himself the equal of the King of England—whom he actually calls his brother!

THIRD PASSENGER

He must be taken for what he is, not for what he was; and if he calls King George his brother it doesn't speak badly for his friendliness.

FIRST PASSENGER

Whether or no, the King, rightly enough, did not reply in person, but through Lord Mulgrave our Foreign Minister, to the effect that his Britannic Majesty cannot give a specific answer till he has communicated with the Continental powers.

THIRD PASSENGER

Both the manner and the matter of the reply are British; but a huge mistake.

FIRST PASSENGER

Sir, am I to deem you a friend of Bonaparte, a traitor to your country——

THIRD PASSENGER

Damn my wig, sir, if I'll be called a traitor by you or any Court sycophant at all at all !

SECOND PASSENGER

Gentlemen, forbear, forbear ! Should such differences be suffered to arise on a spot where we may, in less than three months, be fighting for our very existence ? This is foolish, I say. Heaven alone, who reads the secrets of this man's heart, can tell what his meaning and intent may be, and if his letter has been answered wisely or no.

The coach is stopped to skid the wheel for the descent of the hill, and before it starts again a dusty horseman overtakes it.

SEVERAL PASSENGERS

A London messenger ! (To horseman) Any news, sir ? We are from Bristol only.

HORSEMAN

Yes ; much. We have declared war against Spain, an error giving vast delight

of France. Bonaparte says he will date his next dispatches from London, and the landing of his army may be daily expected.

[Exit horseman.]

THIRD PASSENGER (to First)

Sir, I apologize. He's not to be trusted !
War is his name, and aggression is with him !

A silence follows. The coach and passengers move downwards and disappear towards the coast.

SPIRIT OF THE PITIES

*Ill chanced it that the English monarch George
Did not respond to the said Emperor !*

SPIRIT SINISTER

*I saw good sport therein, and pæan'd the Will
That It restrained so stultifying a move !
Which would have marred the European broil,
And sheathed all swords, and silenced every
gun
That riddles human flesh.*

SPIRIT OF THE PITIES

*O say no more ;
If aught could gratify the Absolute
'Twould verily be thy censure, not thy praise !*

SPIRIT OF THE YEARS

*The ruling was that we should witness things
And not dispute them. To the drama, then.
Emprizes over-Channel are the key
To this land's stir and ferment.—Thither we.*

Clouds gather over the scene, and slowly open elsewhere.

SCENE II

PARIS. OFFICE OF THE MINISTER OF MARINE

ADMIRAL DECRÈS seated at a table. A knock without.

DECRÈS

Come in! Good news, I hope!

[An attendant enters.

ATTENDANT

A courier, sir.

DECRÈS

Show him in straightway.

[The attendant goes out.

From the Emperor
As I expected !

A courier is admitted, who delivers a dispatch.

COURIER

Sir, for your own hand,
And yours alone.

DECRÈS

Thanks. Be in waiting near.

[The courier withdraws.]

DECRÈS *reads* :

“I am resolved that no wild dream of Ind,
And what we there might win ; or of the
West,
And bold re-conquest there of Surinam
And other Dutch retreats along those coasts,
Or British islands nigh, shall draw me now
From piercing into England through Boulogne
As lined in my first plan. If I do strike,
I strike effectively ; to forge which feat
There’s but one way — planting a mortal
wound
In England’s heart—the very English land—
Whose insolent and cynical reply
To my well-based complaint on breach of faith
Concerning Malta, as at Amiens pledged,

Has lighted up anew such flames of ire
As may involve the world.—Now to the case :
Our naval forces can be all assembled
Without the foe's foreknowledge or surmise,
By these rules following ; to whose text I ask
Your gravest application ; and, when conned,
That steadfastly you stand by word and word,
Making no question of one jot therein.

“ First, then, let Villeneuve wait a favouring
wind

For process westward swift to Martinique,
Coaxing the English after. Join him there
Gravina, Missiessy, and Ganteaume ;
Which junction once effected all our keels—
Now nigh to sixty sail—regain the Manche,
While the pursuers linger in the West
At hopeless fault. — Having hoodwinked
them thus,

Our boats skim over, disembark the army,
And in the twinkling of a patriot's eye
All London will be ours.

“ In strictest secrecy carve this to shape :
Let never an admiral or captain know
Save Villeneuve and Ganteaume ; and pen
each charge
With your own quill. The surelier to outwit
them

I start for Italy ; and there, as 'twere
Engrossed in fêtes and Coronation rites,

Abide till, at the need, I reach Boulogne,
And head the enterprize.—NAPOLÉON.”

DECRÈS reflects, and turns to write.

SPIRIT OF THE PITIES

More ills ? How is Decrès ordained to move ?

SPIRIT OF THE YEARS

*He sets him to the work. First to Villeneuve,
His onetime comrade and his boyhood's friend,
Now lingering at Toulon, he jots swift lines,
Then duly to Ganteaume.—They are sealed
forthwith,
And superscribed : “ Break not until at sea.”*

Boisterous singing is heard in the street.

SPIRIT OF THE PITIES

*I hear confused and simmering sounds without,
Like those which thrill the hives at evenfall
When swarming nears.*

SPIRIT OF THE YEARS

*They but proclaim the crowd,
Which sings and shouts its hot enthusiasms
For this dead-ripe design on England's shore,
Till the persuasion of its own plump words,
Acting upon mercurial temperaments,
Makes hope as prophecy. “ Our Emperor*

*Will show himself (say they) in this exploit
Unwavering, keen, and irresistible
As is the lightning-prong. Our vast flotillas
Have been embodied as by sorcery ;
Soldiers made seamen, and the ports transformed
To rocking cities casemented with guns.
Against these valiants balance England's means:
Raw merchant-fellows from the counting-house,
Raw labourers from the fields, who thumb for
arms
Clumsy untempered pikes forged hurriedly,
And fancy them full quipt. Their batteries,
Their flying carriages, their catamarans,
Shall profit not, and in one summer night
We'll find us there ! ”*

RECORDING ANGEL

And is this prophecy true ?

SPIRIT OF THE YEARS

Occasion will reveal.

SHADE OF THE EARTH

*What boots it, Sire,
To down this dynasty, set that one up,
Goad panting peoples to the throes thereof,
Make wither here my fruit, maintain it there,
And hold me travailling through fineless years
In vain and objectless monotony,*

*When all such tedious conjuring could be shunned
By uncreation? Howsoever wise
The governance of these massed mortalities,
A juster wisdom his who should have ruled
They had not been.*

SPIRIT OF THE YEARS

*Nay, something hidden urged
The giving matter motion; and these coils
Are, maybe, good as any.*

SPIRIT OF THE PITIES

But why any?

SPIRIT OF THE YEARS

*Sprite of Compassions, ask the Immanent!
I am but an accessory of Its works
Whom chance has rendered conscious; and at
most
Figure as bounden witness of Its laws.*

SPIRIT OF THE PITIES

*How ask the aim of unrelaxing Will,
Tranced in Its purpose to unknowingness?
(If thy words, Ancient Phantom, token true).*

SPIRIT OF THE YEARS

*Thou answerest well. But cease to ask of me.
Meanwhile the mime proceeds.—We turn here-
from,*

*Change our homuncules, and observe forthwith
How the High Influence sways the English realm,
And how the jacks click out their reasonings
there.*

The Cloud-curtain draws.

SCENE III

LONDON. THE OLD HOUSE OF COMMONS

A long chamber with a gallery on each side supported by thin columns having gilt Ionic capitals. Three round-headed windows are at the further end, above the Speaker's chair, which is backed by a huge pedimented structure in white and gilt, surmounted by the lion and the unicorn. The windows are uncurtained, one being open, through which some boughs are seen waving in the midnight gloom without. Wax candles, burnt low, wave and gutter in a brass chandelier which hangs from the middle of the ceiling, and in branches projecting from the galleries.

The House is sitting, the benches, which extend round to the Speaker's elbows, being closely packed, and the galleries likewise full. Among the members present on the Government side are PITT and other ministers with their supporters, including CANNING, CASTLEREAGH, LORD C. SOMERSET, ERSKINE, W. DUNDAS, HUSKISSON, ROSE, BEST, ELLIOT, DALLAS, and the general body of the party. On the opposite side are noticeable FOX, SHERIDAN, WINDHAM, WHITBREAD, GREY, T. GRENVILLE, TIERNEY, EARL TEMPLE, PONSONBY, G. and H. WALPOLE, DUDLEY NORTH, and TIMOTHY SHELLEY. Speaker ABBOT occupies the Chair.

SPIRIT OF THE YEARS (to two Recording
Angels)

*As prelude to the scene, as means to aid
Our younger comrades in its construing,
Pray ope your scripture, and rehearse in brief
The reasonings here of late—to whose effects
Words of to-night form sequence.*

The Recording Angels chant from their books,
antiphonally, in a minor recitative.

ANGEL I (aerial music)

*Feeble-framed dull unresolve, unresourcefulness,
Sat in the halls of the Kingdom's high Councillors,
Whence an untactical torpid despondency
Weighed as with winter the national mind.*

ANGEL II

*England stands forth to the sword of Napoléon
Nakedly—not an ally in support of her ;
Men and munitions dispersed inexpediently ;
Projects of range and scope poorly defined.*

ANGEL I

*Once more doth Pitt deem the land crying loud
to him.—
Frail though and spent, and an hungered for
restfulness
Once more responds he, dead fervours to energize,
Aims to concentre, slack efforts to bind.*

ANGEL II

*Ere the first fruit thereof voices grow audible,
Holding as hapless his dream of home guardian-
ship,
Festively, earnestly, shouting it serviceless,
Tardy, inept, and uncouthly designed.*

ANGELS I AND II

*So now, to-night, in the slashing old sentences,
Hear them speak,—gravely these, those with
gay-heartedness,—
Midst their admonishments little conceiving how
Scarlet the scroll that the years will unwind!*

SPIRIT OF THE PITIES (to the Spirit of
the Years)

*Let us put on and suffer for the nonce
The feverish fleshings of Humanity,
And join the pale debaters here convened.
So may thy soul be won to sympathy
By donning their poor mould.*

SPIRIT OF THE YEARS

*I'll humour thee,
Though my unpassioned essence could not
change
Did I incarn in moulds of all mankind!*

SPIRIT IRONIC

'Tis enough to make every little dog in England run to mixen to hear this Pitt sung so strenuously! I'll be the third of the incarnate, on the chance of having the tune played the other way.

SPIRIT SINISTER

And I the fourth. There's sure to be something in my line toward, where politicians are gathered together!

The four Phantoms enter the Gallery of the House in the disguise of ordinary strangers.

SHERIDAN (rising)

The Bill I would have leave to introduce
Is framed, sir, to repeal last Session's Act,
By party-scribes intituled a Provision
For this isle's Proper Guard; but elsewhere
known

As Mr. Pitt's new Patent Parish Pill. (Laughter.)

The ministerial countenances, I mark,
Congeal to dazed surprise at my straight
motion—

Why, passes sane conjecture. It may be
That with a haughty and unwavering faith
In their own battering-rams of argument,

They deemed our buoyance whelmed, and
sapped, and sunk

To hope's sheer bottom, whence a miracle
Was all could friend and float us ; or, maybe,
They are amazed at our rude disrespect
In making mockery of an English Law
Sprung sacred from the King's own Premier's
brain !

—I hear them snort ; but let them wince at
will,

My duty must be done ; shall be done
quickly

By citing some few facts.

An Act for our defence !

It weakens, not defends ; and oversea
Swoln France's despot and his myrmidons
This moment know it, and can jeer thereat.
Our people know it too—those who can peer
Behind the scenes of this poor painted show
Called soldiering !—The Act has failed, must
fail,

As my right honourable friend well proved
When speaking t'other night, whose silencing
By his right honourable *vis-à-vis*
Was of the genuine Governmental sort,
And like the catamarans their sapience shaped
All fizzle and no harm. (Laughter.) The Act,
in brief,

Effects this much : that the whole force of
England

Is strengthened by—eleven thousand men !

So sorted that the British infantry
Are now eight hundred less than heretofore !

In Ireland, where the personal influence
Of the right honourable gentleman
Particularly prevails, *eleven* men
Have been amassed. And in the Cinque-
Port towns,

Where he is held in absolute veneration,
His method has so quickened martial fire
As to bring in—one man. O would that man
Might meet my sight ! (Laughter.) A

Hercules, no doubt,
A god-like emanation from this Act,
Who with his single arm will overthrow
All Buonaparté's legions ere their keels
Have scraped one pebble of our fortless
shores ! . . .

Such is my motion, sir, and such my mind.

[He sits down amid cheers.]

The candle-snuffers go round, and PITT rises. During the momentary pause before he speaks the House assumes an attentive stillness, in which can be heard the rustling of the trees without, a horn from an early coach, and the voice of the watch crying the hour.

PITT

Not one on this side but appreciates
Those mental gems and airy pleasantries
Flashed by the honourable gentleman,
Who shines in them by birthright. Each
device

Of drollery he has laboured to outshape,
(Or treasured up from others who have
shaped it,)

Displays that are the conjurings of the moment,
(Or mellowed and matured by sleeping on)—
Dry hoardings in his book of commonplace,
Stored without stint of toil through days and
months—

He heaps into one mass, and lights and fans
As fuel for his flaming eloquence,
Which is maintained without a thought or care
If germane to the theme, or not at all.

Now vain indeed it were should I assay
To match him in such sort. For, sir, alas,
To use imagination as the ground
Of chronicle, take myth and merry tale
As texts for prophecy, is not my gift,
Being but a person primed with simple fact,
Unprinked by jewelled art. — But to the
thing.

The preparations of the enemy,
Doggedly bent to desolate our land,
Advance with a sustained activity.
They are seen, they are known, by you and
by us all.

But they evince no clear-eyed tentative
In furtherance of the threat, whose coming off,
Ay, years may yet postpone; whereby the Act
Will far outstrip him, and the thousands called
Duly to join the ranks by its provisions,
In process sure, if slow, will ratch the lines

Of English regiments—seasoned, cool, resolved—

To glorious length and firm prepotency.

And why, then, should we dream of its repeal
Ere profiting by its advantages?

Must the House listen to such wilding words
As this proposal, at the very hour

When the Act's gearing finds its ordered
grooves

And circles into full utility?

The motion of the honourable gentleman

Reminds me aptly of a publican

Who should, when malting, mixing, mashing's
past,

Fermenting, barrelling, and spigoting,

Quick taste the brew, and shake his sapient
head,

And cry in acid voice : The ale is new !

Brew old, you varlets ; cast this slop away !

(Cheers.)

But gravely, sir, I would conclude to-
night,

And, as a serious man on serious things,

I now speak here. . . . I pledge myself to this :

Unprecedented and magnificent

As were our strivings in the previous war,

Our efforts in the present shall transcend
them,

As men will learn. Such efforts are not
sized

By this light measuring-rule my critic here

Whips from his pocket like a clerk-o'-works!...
Tasking and toilsome war's details must be,
And toilsome, too, must be their criticism,—
Not in a moment's stroke extemporized.

The strange fatality that haunts the times
Wherein our lot is cast, has no example.
Times are they fraught with peril, trouble,
gloom ;
We have to mark their lourings, and to face
them.

Sir, reading thus the full significance
Of these big days, large though my lackings be,
Can any hold of those who know my past
That I, of all men, slight our safeguarding ?
No: by all honour no!—Were I convinced
That such could be the mind of members here,
My sorrowing thereat would doubly shade
The shade on England now ! So I do trust
All in the House will take my tendered word,
And credit my deliverance here to-night,
That in this vital point of watch and ward
Against the threatenings from yonder coast
We stand prepared ; and under Providence
Shall fend whatever hid or open stroke
A foe may deal.

He sits down amid loud ministerial cheers, with
symptoms of great exhaustion.

WINDHAM

The question that compels the House to-night
Is not of differences 'twixt wit and wit,

But if for England it be well or no
To null the present Act, as one inept
For setting up with speed and hot effect
The red machinery of desperate war.—
Whatever it may do, or not, 'tis this,
A statesman's raw experiment. If ill,
Shall more experiments and more be tried
In face of jeopardy that makes demand
For sureness of proceeding? Must this
House

Exchange safe action based on practised lines
For yet more ventures into risks unknown
To gratify a quaint projector's whim,
While enemies hang grinning round our gates
To profit by mistake?

My friend who spoke
Found comedy in the matter. Comical
As it may be in parentage and feature,
Most grave and tragic in its consequence
This Act may prove. We are moving
thoughtlessly,

We squander precious, brief, life-saving time
On idle guess-games. Fail the measure must,
Nay, failed it has already; and should stir
Resolve in its progenitor himself
To move for its repeal! (Cheers.)

WHITBREAD

I rise but to subjoin a phrase or two
To those of my right honourable friend.

I, too, am one who reads the present danger
As passing all our risks of heretofore.
For why? Our bold and reckless enemy,
Relaxing not his plans, has gained him time
To mass his monstrous force on all the coigns
From which our coast is most assailable.
Ay, even afloat his concentrations work :
Two vast united squadrons of his sail
Move at this moment viewless on the seas.—
Their whereabouts, untraced, unguessable,
Will not be known to us till some black blow
Be struck by them in some undreamt-of
 quarter
To end our rule.
That we are reasonably secured therefrom
By such an Act is but a madman's dream.
A commonwealth so situate cries aloud
For more, far greater, measures ! End an
 Act
In Heaven's name, then, which only can
 obstruct
The adumbration of a sounder plan
For building up an army. (Cheers.)

BATHURST

 Sir, the point
To any sober mind is bright as noon ;
Whether the Act should have befitting trial
Or be condemned at sight. I firmly hold
The latter rank iniquity.—One task

Is theirs who would inter this corpse-cold Act—
(So deemed)—to bring to light a substitute.
Sir, they have none; they have given no
thought to one,

And thus their deeds incautiously disclose
Their cloaked intention and most secret aim.
With them the question is not how to frame
A finer scheme to trounce intrusive foes,
But who shall be the future ministers
To whom such scheme against intrusive foes,
Whatever it may prove, shall be entrusted!
They even ask the country gentlemen
To join them in this plot. But, God be
praised,

Those gentlemen are sound, and of repute;
Their names, their property, their character,
Their numbers, their attainments, and their
blood, (Ironical Opposition cheers.)

Safeguard them from an onslaught on an Act
For ends so sinister and palpable! (Cheers.)

FULLER

I disapprove of censures of this Act.—
All who can entertain such hostile thought
Would swear that black is white, that night
is day.

No honest man will join a reckless crew
Who'd overthrow their country for their gain!
(Laughter.)

TIERNEY

It is incumbent on me to declare
In the last speaker's face my censure, based
On grounds distinct and constitutional.—
An Act it is that labours to create
A standing army, large and permanent ;
Which kind of force has ever been beheld
With jealous-eyed disfavour in this House.
It makes for sure oppression, binding men
To serve for less than service proves it worth
Conditioned by no hampering penalty.
For these and late-spoke reasons, then, I say,
Let not the Act deface the statute-book,
But blot it out forthwith. (Hear, hear.)

Fox (rising amid cheers)

At this late hour,
After the riddling fire the Act has drawn on't,
My words shall hold the House the briefest
while.

Too obvious to the most unwilling mind
It grows that the existence of this law
Experience and reflection have condemned.
Professing to do much, it makes for nothing ;
Vouched as assuring all, it comforts none.
Not only so ; while feeble in effect
It shows it vicious in its principle.
Engaging to raise men for the common weal,
It sets a harmful and unequal tax

Capriciously on our communities.—
The annals of a century, sir, unshow
More flagrant cases of oppressiveness
Than those this statute works to perpetrate,
Which (like all Bills this favoured statesman
frames,

And clothes with tapestries of rhetoric
Disguising their real web of commonplace)
Though held as shaped for English bulwarking,
Breathes in its heart the perverse schemes of
party,

And instincts toward oligarchic power,
Galling the many to relieve the few ! (Cheers.)

Whatever breadth and sense of equity
Inform the methods of this minister,
Those qualities nigh always trace their root
To measures that his predecessors wrought.
And ere his Government can dare assert
Superior claims to England's confidence,
They owe it to their honour and good
name

To furnish better proof of such a claim
Than is revealed by the abortiveness
Of this thing called an Act for our Defence.

To the great gifts of its artificer
No member of this House is more disposed
To yield full recognition than am I.
No man has found more reason so to do
Through the long roll of disputatious years
Wherein we have stood opposed. . . .
But if one single fact could counsel me

To entertain a doubt of those great gifts,
And cancel faith in his capacity,
That fact would be the vast imprudence shown
In staking recklessly repute like his
On such an Act as he has offered us—
So false in principle, so poor in fruit.
Sir, the achievements and effects thereof
Have furnished not one fragile argument
Which all the partiality of friendship
Can kindle to consider as the mark
Of a clear, vigorous, freedom-fostering mind !

He sits down amid cheers from the Opposition.

SHERIDAN

My summary shall be brief, and to the point.—
The said right honourable Prime Minister
Has thought it proper to declare my speech
The jesting of an irresponsible ;—
Words from a person who has never read
The Act he claims him urgent to repeal.
Such quips and quizzings (as he reckons
them)

He implicates as gathered from long hoards
Stored up with cruel care, to be discharged
With sudden blaze of pyrotechnic art
On the devoted, gentle, shrinking head
Of the right honourable gentleman. (Laughter.)
But were my humble, solemn, sad oration
(Laughter.)
Indeed such rattle as he rated it,

By pledging them to Continental quarrels
Of which we see no end ! (Cheers.)

The members rise to divide.¹

SPIRIT OF THE PITIES

*It irks me that they thus should Yea and Nay,
As though a power lay in their oraclings,
If each decision work unconsciously,
And would be operant though unloosened were
A single lip !*

SPIRIT OF RUMOUR

*There may react on things
Some influence from these, indefinitely,
And even on That, whose outcome we all are.*

SPIRIT OF THE YEARS

*Hypotheses !—More boots it to remind
The younger here of our ethereal band
And hierarchy of Intelligences,
That this thwart Parliament whose moods we
watch—
So insular, empiric, un-ideal—
May figure forth in sharp and salient lines
To retrospective eyes of afterdays,*

¹ The foregoing is an attempt to give the substance of the memorable debate which took place on the evening represented ; but reports differ in some particulars.

*And print its legend large on History.
For one cause—if I read the signs aright—
To-night's appearance of its Minister
In the assembly of his long-time sway
Is near his last, and themes to-night launched forth
Will take a tincture from that memory,
When men recall the scene and circumstance
That hung about his pleadings.—But no more ;
The ritual of each party is rehearsed,
Dislodging not one vote or prejudice ;
The ministers their ministries retain,
And Ins as Ins, and Outs as Outs, remain.*

SPIRIT OF THE PITIES

*Meanwhile what of the Foeman's vast array
That wakes these tones ?*

SPIRIT OF THE YEARS

*Abide the event, young Shade :
Soon stars will shut and show a spring-eyed dawn,
And sunbeams fountain forth, that will arouse
Those forming bands to full activity.*

An honourable member reports that he spies strangers.
*A timely token that we dally here !
We now cast off these mortal manacles,
And speed us seaward.*

The four Phantoms vanish from the Gallery. The members file out to the lobbies. The House and Westminster recede into the films of night, and the point of observation shifts rapidly across the Channel.

SCENE IV

THE HARBOUR OF BOULOGNE

A morning radiant with early sunlight. The French Army of Invasion is disclosed. On the hills on either side of the town and behind appear large military camps formed of timber huts. Lower down are other camps of more or less permanent kind, the whole affording accommodation for one hundred and fifty thousand men.

South of the town is an extensive basin surrounded by quays, the heaps of fresh soil around showing it to be a recent excavation from the banks of the Liane. The basin is crowded with the flotilla, consisting of hundreds of vessels of sundry kinds: flat-bottomed brigs with guns and two masts; boats of one mast, carrying each an artillery waggon, two guns, and a two-stalled horse-box; transports with three low masts; and long narrow pinnaces arranged for many oars.

Timber, saw-mills, and new-cut planks spread in profusion around, and many of the town residences are seen to be adapted for warehouses and infirmaries.

DUMB SHOW

Moving in this scene are countless companies of soldiery, engaged in a drill-practice of embarking and disembarking, and of hoisting horses into the vessels and landing them again. Vehicles bearing provisions of many sorts load and unload before the temporary warehouses. Further off, on the open land, bodies of troops are at field-drill. Other bodies of soldiers, half stripped and encrusted with mud, are labouring as navvies in repairing the excavations.

An English squadron of about twenty sail, comprising

a ship or two of the line, frigates, brigs, and luggers, confronts the busy spectacle from the sea.

The Show presently dims, and anon a curtain of cloud closes over it.

SCENE V

LONDON. THE HOUSE OF A LADY OF QUALITY

A fashionable crowd is present at an evening party, which includes the DUKES of BEAUFORT and RUTLAND, LORDS MALMESBURY, HARROWBY, ELTON, GRENVILLE, CASTLEREAGH, SIDMOUTH, and MULGRAVE, with their ladies; also CANNING, PERCIVAL, TOWNSHEND, LADY ANNE HAMILTON, MRS. DAMER, LADY CAROLINE LAMB, and many other notables.

A GENTLEMAN (offering his snuff-box)

So, then, the Treaty anxiously concerted
Between ourselves and frosty Muscovy
Is duly signed?

A CABINET MINISTER

Was signed a few days back,
And is in force. And we do firmly hope
The loud pretensions and the stunning dins
From new aggressiveness by France's chief,
Now daily heard, these laudable exertions
May keep in curb; that ere our greening land
Darken its leaves beneath the Dogday suns,
The independence of the Continent
May be assured, and all the rumpled flags

Of famous dynasties so rudely mauled,
Extend their honoured hues as heretofore.

GENTLEMAN

So be it. Yet this man is a volcano ;
And proven 'tis, by God, volcanoes choked
Have ere now turned to earthquakes !

A lady comes up and playfully taps his arm.

LADY

What's the news ?—
The chequerboard of diplomatic moves
Is London, all the world knows : here are
born
All inspirations of the Continent—
So tell !

GENTLEMAN

Ay. Inspirations now abound !

LADY

Nay, but your looks are grave ! That
measured speech
Betokened matter that will waken us.—
Is it some piquant cruelty of his ?
Or other tickling horror from abroad
The packet has brought in ?

GENTLEMAN

The treaty's signed !

MINISTER

Whereby the parties mutually agree
To knit in union and in general league
All outraged Europe.

LADY

Such knitting close sounds well ;
But how ensure its not unravelling ?

MINISTER

Well ; by the terms. There are among
them these :

Five hundred thousand active men in arms
Shall strike (supported by Britannic aid
In vessels, men, and money subsidies)
To free North Germany and Hanover
From trampling foes ; deliver Switzerland,
Unbind the galled republic of the Dutch,
Rethrone in Piedmont the Sardinian King,
Make Naples sword-proof, un-French Italy
From shore to shore ; and thoroughly
guarantee

A settled order to the divers states ;
Thus rearing breachless barriers in each realm
Against the thrust of his usurping hand.

SPIRIT OF THE YEARS

*They trow not what is shaping otherwhere
The while they talk thus stoutly !*

SPIRIT OF RUMOUR

*Bid me go**And join them, and all blandly kindle them
By bringing, ere material transit can,
A new surprise?*

SPIRIT OF THE YEARS

Yea, for a moment, wouldst.

The Spirit of Rumour enters the apartment in the form of a personage of fashion, newly arrived. He advances and addresses the group.

SPIRIT

*The Treaty moves all tongues to-night.—Ha,
well—
So much on paper!*

GENTLEMAN

What on land and sea?
You look, old friend, full primed with latest
thence.

SPIRIT

*Yea, this. The Italy our mighty pact
Delivers from the French and Bonaparte
Makes haste to crown him!—Turning from
Boulogne
He speeds toward Milan, there to glory him*

*In second coronation by the Pope,
And set upon his irrepressible brow
Lombardy's iron crown.*

The Spirit of Rumour mingles with the throng,
moves away, and disappears.

LADY

Fair Italy,

Alas, alas!

LORD

Yet thereby English folk
Are freed him.—Faith, as ancient people say,
It's an ill wind that blows good luck to none!

MINISTER

Who is your friend that drops so airily
This precious pinch of salt on our raw skin?

GENTLEMAN

Why, Norton. You know Norton well
enough.

MINISTER

Nay, 'twas not he. Norton of course I know.
I thought him Stewart for a moment, but——

LADY

But I well scanned him—'twas Lord Abercorn;
For, said I to myself, "O quaint old beau,

To sleep in black silk sheets so funnily"—
That is, if the town rumour on't be true. .

LORD

My wig, ma'am, no ! 'Twas a much younger
man.

GENTLEMAN

But let me call him ! Monstrous silly this,
That I don't know my friends !

They look around. The gentleman goes among the
surging and babbling guests, makes inquiries, and returns
with a perplexed look.

GENTLEMAN

They tell me, sure,
That he's not here to-night !

MINISTER

I can well swear
It was not Norton.—'Twas some lively buck,
Who chose to put himself in masquerade
And enter for a whim. I'll tell our host.
Meantime the absurdity of his report
Is more than manifested. How knows he
The plans of Bonaparte by lightning-flight,
Before another man in England knows ?

E

LADY

Something uncanny's in it all, if true.
Good Lord, the thought gives me a sudden
sweat,
That fairly makes my linen stick to me !

MINISTER

Ha-ha ! 'Tis excellent. But we'll find out
Who this impostor was.

They disperse, look furtively for the stranger, and
speak of the incident to others of the crowded company.

SPIRIT OF THE YEARS

*Now let us vision onward, till we sight
Famed Milan's aisles of marble, sun-alight,
And there behold, unbid, the Coronation-rite.*

The confused tongues of the assembly waste away
into distance, till they are heard but as the ripples of
the sea from a high cliff, the scene becoming small and
indistinct therewith. This passes into silence, and the
whole disappears.

SCENE VI

MILAN. THE CATHEDRAL

The interior of the building on a sunny May day.

The walls, arches, and columns are draped in silk
fringed with gold. A gilded throne stands in front of
the High Altar. A closely packed assemblage, in every
variety of rich costume, waits in breathless expectation.

DUMB SHOW

From a private corridor leading to a door in the aisle the EMPRESS JOSÉPHINE enters, in a shining costume, and diamonds that collect rainbow-colours from the sunlight piercing the clerestory windows. She is preceded by PRINCESS ELIZA, and surrounded by her ladies. A pause follows, and then comes the procession of the EMPEROR, consisting of hussars, heralds, pages, aides-de-camp, presidents of institutions, officers of state bearing the insignia of the Empire and of Italy, and seven ladies with offerings. The EMPEROR himself is in royal robes, wearing the Imperial crown, and carrying the sceptre. He is followed by ministers and officials of the household. His gait is rather defiant than dignified, and a bluish pallor overspreads his face.

He is met by the Cardinal Archbishop CAPRARA and the clergy, who burn incense before him as he proceeds towards the throne. Rolling notes of music burst forth, and loud applause from the congregation.

SPIRIT OF THE PITIES

What is the creed that these rich rites disclose?

SPIRIT OF THE YEARS

*A local thing called Christianity,
Which the wild dramas of this wheeling sphere
Include, with divers other such, in dim,
Pathetical, and brief parentheses ;
Beyond whose reach, uninfluenced, unconcerned,
The systems of the suns go sweeping on
With all their many-mortaled planet train
In mathematic roll unceasingly.*

SPIRIT OF THE PITIES

*I did not recognize it here, forsooth ;
Though in its early, lovingkindly days
Of gracious purpose it was much to me.*

ARCHBISHOP (addressing BONAPARTE)

Sire, with that clemency and right good-
will

Which beautify Imperial Majesty,
You deigned acceptance of the homages
That we the clergy and the Milanese
Were proud to offer when your entrance
here

Streamed radiance on our ancient capital.
Please, then, to consummate the boon to-day
Beneath this holy roof, so soon to thrill
With solemn strains and lifting harmonies
Befitting such a coronation hour ;
And bend a tender fatherly regard
On this assembly, now at one with me
To supplicate the Author of All Good
That He endow your most Imperial person
With every Heavenly gift.

The procession advances, and the EMPEROR seats himself on the throne, with the banners and regalia of the Empire on his right, and those of Italy on his left hand. Shouts and triumphal music accompany the proceedings, after which Divine service commences.

SPIRIT OF THE PITIES

*Thus are the self-styled servants of the Highest
Constrained by earthly duress to embrace
Mighty imperiousness as it were choice,
And hand the Italian sceptre unto one
Who, with a saturnine, sour-humoured grin,
Professed at first to flout antiquity,
Scorn limp conventions, smile at mouldy thrones,
And level dynasts down to journeymen!—
Yet he, advancing swiftly on that track
Whereby his active soul, fair Freedom's child,
Makes strange decline, now labours to achieve
The thing it overthrew.*

SPIRIT OF THE YEARS

*Thou reasonest ever thuswise—even as if
A self-formed force had urged his loud career.*

SPIRIT SINISTER

*Do not the prelate's accents falter thin,
His lips with inheld laughter grow deformed,
While blessing one whose aim is but to win
The golden seats that other b——s have warmed?*

SPIRIT OF THE YEARS

*Soft, jester; scorn not puppetry so skilled,
Even made to feel by one men call the Dame.*

SHADE OF THE EARTH

*Yea ; that they feel, and puppetry remain,
Is an owned flaw in her consistency
Men love to dub Dame Nature—that lay-shape
They use to hang phenomena upon—
Whose deftest mothering in fairest spheres
Is girt about by terms inexorable !*

SPIRIT SINISTER

*The lady's remark is apposite, and reminds
me that I may as well hold my tongue as de-
sired. For if my casual scorn, Father Years,
should set thee trying to prove that there is
any rhyme or reason in the Universe, thou wilt
not accomplish it by Doomsday ! Small blame
to her, however ; she must cut her coat accord-
ing to her cloth, as they say down below there.*

SPIRIT OF THE YEARS

*O would that I could move It to enchain thee,
And shut thee up a thousand years !—(to cite
A grim terrestrial tale of one thy like)
Thou Iago of the Incorporeal World,
“ As they would say below there.”*

SPIRIT OF THE PITIES

*Would thou couldst !
But move That scoped above percipience, Sire,
It cannot be !*

SHADE OF THE EARTH

The spectacle proceeds.

SPIRIT SINISTER

And we may as well give all attention thereto, for what is doing in other continents is not worth eyesight. Our meanest deputies can take note of the dull show of evils going on there.

The ceremonial in the Cathedral continues. NAPOLÉON goes to the front of the altar, ascends the steps, and, taking up the crown of Lombardy, places it on his head.

NAPOLÉON

'Tis God has given it to me. So be it.
Let any who shall touch it now beware !

(Reverberations of applause.)

The Sacrament of the Mass. NAPOLÉON reads the Coronation Oath in a loud voice.

HERALDS

Give ear ! Napoléon, Emperor of the French
And King of Italy, is crowned and throned !

CONGREGATION

Long live the Emperor and King. Huzza !

Music. The Te Deum.

SPIRIT OF THE PITIES

*That vulgar stroke of vauntery he displayed
In planting on his brow the Lombard crown,
Means sheer erasure of the Luneville pacts,
And lets confusion loose on Europe's peace
For many an undawned year! From this rash
hour*

*Austria but waits her opportunity
By secret swellings of her armaments
To link her to his foes.—I'll speak to him.*

He throws a whisper into NAPOLÉON's ear.

*Lieutenant Bonaparte,
Would it not seemlier be to shut thy heart
To these unhealthy splendours?—render thee
To whom thou swarest first, fair Liberty?*

NAPOLÉON

Who spoke to me?

ARCHBISHOP

Not I, Sire. Not a soul.

NAPOLÉON

Dear Joséphine, my queen, didst call my
name?

JOSÉPHINE

I spoke not, Sire.

* NAPOLÉON

Thou didst not, tender spouse ;
I know it. Such harsh utterance was not
thine.

'Twas but aggressive Fancy working spells
Upon a mind o'erwrought !

The service closes. The clergy advance with the
canopy to the foot of the throne, and the procession
forms to return to the Palace.

SPIRIT OF THE YEARS

*Officious sprite,
Thou'rt young, and dost not heed the Cause of
things
Which some of us have inkled to thee here ;
Else wouldst thou not have hailed the Emperor,
Whose acts do but outshape Its governing.*

SPIRIT OF THE PITIES

*I feel, Sire, as I must ! This tale of Will
And Life's impulsion by Incognizance
I cannot take.*

SPIRIT OF THE YEARS

*Let me then once again
Show to thy sceptic eye the very streams
And currents of this all-inhering Power,
And bring conclusion to thy unbelief.*

The scene assumes the preternatural transparency before mentioned, and there is again beheld as it were the interior of a brain which seems to manifest the volitions of an Universal Will, of whose tissues the personages of the action form portion.

SPIRIT OF THE PITIES

*Enough. And yet for very sorriness
I cannot own the weird phantasma real!*

SPIRIT OF THE YEARS

Affection ever was illogical.

SPIRIT IRONIC (aside)

*How should the Sprite own to such logic—
a mere juvenile—who only came into being in
what the earthlings call their Tertiary Age!*

The scene changes. The exterior of the Cathedral takes the place of the interior, and the point of view recedes, the whole fabric smalling into distance and becoming like a rare, delicately carved alabaster ornament. The city itself sinks to miniature, the Alps show afar as a white corrugation, the Adriatic and the Gulf of Genoa appear on this and that hand, with Italy between them, till clouds cover the panorama.

ACT SECOND

SCENE I

THE DOCKYARD, GIBRALTAR

The Rock is seen rising behind the town and the Alameda Gardens, and the English fleet rides at anchor in the Bay, across which the Spanish shore from Algeciras to Carnero Point shuts in the West. Southward over the Strait is the African coast.

SPIRIT OF THE YEARS

*Our migratory Proskenion now presents
An outlook on the storied Kalpe Rock,
As preface to the vision of the Fleets
Spanish and French, linked for fell purposings.*

RECORDING ANGEL (reciting)

*Their motions and manœuvres, since the fame
Of Bonaparte's enthronement at Milan
Swept swift through Europe's dumb'd communities,
Have stretched the English mind to wide
surmise.
Many well-based alarms (which strange report*

*Much aggravates) as to the pondered blow,
Flutter the public pulse ; all points in turn—
Malta, Brazil, Wales, Ireland, British Ind—
Being held as feasible for force like theirs,
Of lavish numbers and unrecking aim.*

*“ Where, where is Nelson ? ” questions every
tongue ;—*

*“ How views he so unparalleled a scheme ? ”
Their slow uncertain apprehensions ask.*

*“ When Villeneuve puts to sea with all his force,
What may he not achieve, if swift his course ! ”*

SPIRIT OF THE YEARS

*I'll call in Nelson, who has stepped ashore
For the first time these thrice twelvemonths and
more,
And with him one whose insight has alone
Pierced the real project of Napoléon.*

Enter NELSON and COLLINGWOOD, who pace up and down.

SPIRIT OF THE PITIES

*Note Nelson's worn-out features. Much has he
Suffered from labour and anxiety !*

NELSON

In short, dear Coll, the letter which you wrote
me

Had so much pith that I was fain to see you ;
For I am sure that you indeed divine

The true intent and compass of a plot
Which I have spelled in vain.

COLLINGWOOD

I weighed it thus :
Their flight to th' Indies being to draw us off,
That and no more, and clear these coasts of
us—

The standing obstacle to his device—
He cared not what was done at Martinique,
Or where, provided that the general end
Should not be jeopardized—that is to say,
The full-united squadron's quick return.—
Gravina and Villeneuve, once back to Europe,
Can straight make Ferrol, raise there the
blockade,
Then haste to Brest, there to relieve Gan-
teaume,
And next with four- or five-and-fifty sail
Bear down upon our coast as they see fit.—
I read they aim to strike at Ireland still,
As formerly, and as I wrote to you.

NELSON

So far your thoughtful and sagacious words
Have hit the facts. But 'tis no Irish bay
The villains aim to drop their anchors in ;
My word for it : they make the Wessex
shore,
And this vast squadron handled by Villeneuve

Is meant to cloak the passage of their
strength,
Massed in those transports—we being kept
elsewhere
By feigning forces.—Good God, Collingwood,
I must be gone! Yet two more days remain
Ere I can get away.—I must be gone!

COLLINGWOOD

Wherever you may go to, my dear lord,
You carry victory with you. Let them
launch,
Your name will blow them back, as sou'-
west gales
The gulls that beat against them from the
shore.

NELSON

Good Collingwood, I know you trust in me ;
But ships are ships, and do not kindly come
Out of the slow docks of the Admiralty
Like wharfside pigeons when they are
whistled for :—
And there's a damned disparity of force,
Which means tough work awhile for you
and me!

The Spirit of the Years whispers to NELSON.

And I have warnings, warnings, Collingwood,
That my effective hours are shortening here ;

Strange warnings now and then, as 'twere
within me,

Which, though I fear them not, I recog-
nize ! . . .

However, by God's help, I'll live to meet
These foreign boasters ; yea, I'll finish them ;
And then—well, Gunner Death may finish
me !

COLLINGWOOD

View not your life so gloomily, my lord :
'Tis charmed, a needed purpose to fulfil !

NELSON

Ah, Coll. Lead bullets are not all that
wound. . . .

I have a feeling here of dying fires,
A sense of much and deep unworded censure,
Which, compassing about my private life,
Makes all my public service lustreless
In my own eyes.—I fear I am much con-
demned

For those dear Naples and Palermo days,
And her who was the sunshine of them
all ! . . .

He who is with himself dissatisfied,
Though all the world find satisfaction in him,
Is like a rainbow-coloured bird gone blind,
That gives delight it shares not. Happiness ?
It's the philosopher's stone no alchemy

Shall light on in this world I am weary of.—
Smiling I'd pass to my long home to-morrow
Could I with honour, and my country's gain.
But let's adjourn. I waste your hours ashore
By such ill-timed confessions !

They pass out of sight, and the scene closes.

SCENE II

OFF FERROL

The French and Spanish combined squadrons. On board the French admiral's flag-ship. VILLENEUVE is discovered in his cabin, writing a letter.

SPIRIT OF THE PITIES

*He pens in fits, with pallid restlessness,
Like one who sees misfortune stalk the wave,
And can nor face nor flee it.*

SPIRIT OF THE YEARS

*He indites
To his long friend the minister Decrès
Words that go heavily ! . . .*

VILLENEUVE (writing)

"I am made the arbiter in vast designs
Whereof I see black outcomes. Do I this
Or do I that, success, that loves to jilt
Her anxious wooer for some careless blade,

Will not reward me. For, if I must pen it,
Demoralized past prayer is the marine—
Bad masts, bad sails, bad officers, bad men ;
We cling to naval technics long outworn,
And time and opportunity do not avail me
To take up new. I have long suspected such,
But till I saw my helps, the Spanish ships,
I hoped somewhat.—Brest is my nominal port ;
Yet if so, Calder will again attack—
Now reinforced by Nelson or Cornwallis—
And shatter my whole fleet. . . . Shall I admit
That my true inclination and desire
Is to make Cadiz straightway, and not Brest ?
Alas ! thereby I fail the Emperor ;
But shame the navy less.—

Your friend, VILLENEUVE.”

GENERAL LAURISTON enters.

LAURISTON

Admiral, my missive to the Emperor,
Which I shall speed by special courier
From Ferrol this near eve, runs thus and
thus :—

“Gravina’s ships, in Ferrol here at hand,
Embayed but by a temporary wind,
Are all we now await. Combined with these
We sail herefrom to Brest ; there promptly
give

Cornwallis battle, and release Ganteaume ;
Thence, all united, bearing Channelwards ;

A step that sets in motion the first wheel
In the proud project of your Majesty
Now to be engined to the very close,
To wit : that a French fleet shall enter in
And hold the Channel four - and - twenty
hours."—

Such clear assurance to the Emperor
That our intent is modelled on his will
I hasten to dispatch to him forthwith.¹

VILLENEUVE

Yes, Lauriston. I sign to every word.

LAURISTON goes out. VILLENEUVE remains at his
table in reverie.

SPIRIT OF THE YEARS

*We may impress him under visible shapes
That seem to shed a silent-circling doom ;
He's such an one as can be so impressed,
And this much is among our privileges,
Well bounded as they be.—Let us draw near
him.*

The Spirits of the Years and of the Pities take the form of white sea-birds, which alight on the stern-balcony of VILLENEUVE's ship, immediately outside his cabin window. VILLENEUVE after a while lifts his eyes and sees the birds.

¹ Through this tangle of intentions the writer has in the main followed Thiers, whose access to documents would seem to authenticate his details of the famous scheme for England's ruin.

VILLENEUVE

My apprehensions even outstep their cause,
As though some influence smote through
yonder pane.

A pause.

——Why dared I not disclose to him my
thought,

As nightly worded by the whistling shrouds,
That Brest will never see our battled hulls
Helming to north in pomp of cannonry
To take the lead in this red pilgrimage!

——If so it were, now, that I'd screen my skin
From risks of bloody business in the brunt,
My acts could scarcely wear a difference.
Yet I would die to-morrow—not ungladly—
So far removed is carcase-care from me.

'Tis for no self these apprehensions spring,
But for the cause.—Yes, rotten is our marine,
Which, while I know, the Emperor knows not,
And the pale secret chills. Though some
there be

Would beard contingencies and buffet all,
I'll not command a course so conscienceless.
Rather I'll stand, and face Napoléon's rage
When he shall learn what mean the ambiguous
lines

That facts have forced from me.

SPIRIT OF THE PITIES (to the Spirit of
the Years)

*O Eldest-born of the Unconscious Cause—
If such thou beest, as I can fancy thee—
Why dost thou rack him thus? Consistency
Might be preserved, and yet his doom remain.
His olden courage is without reproach;
'Tis but his temper to be gaingiving.*

SPIRIT OF THE YEARS

*I say as I have said long heretofore,
I know but narrow freedom. Feel'st thou not
We are in Its hand, as he?—Here, as elsewhere,
We do but as we may; no further dare.*

The birds disappear, and the scene closes.

SCENE III

THE CAMP AND HARBOUR OF BOULOGNE

The English coast in the distance. Near the Tour d'Ordre stands a hut, with sentinels and aides outside, NAPOLÉON's temporary lodging when not at his headquarters at the Château of Pont-de-Briques, two miles inland.

DUMB SHOW

A courier arrives with dispatches, and enters the Emperor's quarters, whence he emerges and goes on with other dispatches to the hut of DECRÈS, lower down. NAPOLÉON comes out from his hut with a paper

in his hand, and musingly proceeds towards an eminence commanding the sea.

Along the shore below are forming in a far-reaching line more than a hundred thousand infantry. On the downs in the rear of the camps fifteen thousand cavalry are manœuvring, their accoutrements flashing in the sun like a school of mackerel. The flotilla lies in and around the port, alive with moving figures.

With his head forward and his hands behind him the Emperor surveys these animated proceedings in detail, but more frequently turns his face towards the telegraph on the cliff to the south-west, erected to signal when VILLENEUVE and the combined squadrons shall be visible on the west horizon.

He summons one of the aides, who descends to the hut of DECRÈS. DECRÈS comes out from his hut, and hastens to join the Emperor. Dumb show ends.

NAPOLÉON and DECRÈS advance to the foreground
of the scene.

NAPOLÉON

Decrès, this action with Sir Robert Calder
Three weeks ago, whereof we dimly heard,
And clear details of which I have just unsealed,
Is on the whole auspicious for our plan.
It seems that twenty of our ships and
Spain's—

None over eighty-gunned, and some far less—
Engaged the English off Cape Finisterre
With fifteen vessels of a hundred each.
We coolly fought and orderly as they,
And, but for mist, we had closed with victory.
Two English were much hit, some Spanish
damaged,

And Calder then drew off with his two wrecks
And Spain's in tow, we giving chase forthwith.
Not overtaking him our admiral,
Having the coast clear for his purposes,
Entered Coruña, and found orders there
To open the port of Brest and come on hither.
Thus hastes the moment when the double fleet
Of Villeneuve and of Ganteaume should
appear.

He looks again towards the telegraph.

DECRÈS (with hesitation)

And should they not appear, your Majesty?

NAPOLÉON

Not? But they will; and do it early, too!
There's nothing hinders them. My God,
they must,
For I have much before me when this stroke
At England's dealt. I learn from Talleyrand
That Austrian preparations threaten hot,
While Russia's hostile schemes are ripening,
And shortly must be met.—My plan is fixed:
I am prepared for each alternative.
If Villeneuve come, I brave the British coast,
Convulse the land with fear ('tis even now
So far distraught that generals cast about
To find new modes of warfare; yea, design
Carriages to transport their infantry!).—

Once on the English soil I hold it firm,
Descend on London, and the while my men
Salute the dome of Paul's I cut the knot
Of all Pitt's coalitions ; setting free
From bondage to a cold manorial caste
A people who await it.

They stand and regard the chalky cliffs of England,
till NAPOLÉON resumes :

Should it be
Even that my admirals fail to keep the
 tryst—
A thing scarce thinkable, when all's re-
 viewed—
I strike this seaside camp, cross Germany,
With these two hundred thousand seasoned
 men,
And pause not till within Vienna's walls
I cry checkmate. Next, Venice, too, being
 taken,
And Austria's other holdings down that way,
The Bourbons also driven from Italy,
I strike at Russia—each in turn, you note,
Ere they can act conjoined.

Report to me
What has been scanned to-day upon the main,
And on your passage down request them
 there
To send Daru this way.

DECRÈS (as he withdraws)

The Emperor can be sanguine. Scarce can I.
His letters are more promising than mine.
Alas, alas, Villeneuve, my dear old friend,
Why do you pen me this at such a time !

[He retires reading a letter.

The Emperor walks up and down till DARU, his
private secretary, joins him.

NAPOLÉON

Come quick, Daru ; sit down upon the grass,
And write whilst I am in mind.

First to Villeneuve :—

“I trust, vice-admiral, that before this date
Your fleet has opened Brest, and gone. If not,
These lines will reach you there. But pause
not, pray :

Waste not a moment dallying. Sail away :
Once bring my coupled squadrons Channel-
wards

And England's soil is ours. All's ready here,
The troops alert, and every store embarked.
Hold the nigh sea but four-and-twenty hours
And our vast end is gained.”

Now to Ganteaume :—

“My telegraphs will have made known to you
My object and desire to be but this,
That you forbid Villeneuve to lose an hour
In getting fit and putting forth to sea,

To profit by the fifty first-rate craft
Wherewith I now am bettered. Quickly
weigh,
And steer you for the Channel with all your
strength.

I count upon your well-known character,
Your enterprize, your vigour, to do this.
Sail hither, then ; and we will be avenged
For centuries of despite and contumely."

DARU

Shall a fair transcript, Sire, be made forthwith ?

NAPOLÉON

This moment. And the courier will depart
And travel without pause.

DARU goes to his office a little lower down, and the
Emperor lingers on the cliffs looking through his glass.

The point of view shifts across the Channel, the
Boulogne cliffs sinking behind the water-line.

SCENE IV

SOUTH WESSEX. AN OPEN DOWN NEAR
THE COAST

A wide view over the English Channel in front, including the Isle of Slings and its roadstead, where men-of-war and frigates are anchored. The hour is ten in the morning, and the sun glows upon a large military encampment round about the foreground, and warms the stone field-walls that take the place of hedges here.

Artillery, cavalry, and infantry, English and Hanoverian, are drawn up for review under the DUKE OF CUMBERLAND and officers of the staff, forming a vast military array, which extends three miles, and as far as the downs are visible.

In the centre by the Royal Standard appears KING GEORGE on horseback, and his suite. In a coach drawn by six cream-coloured Hanoverian horses QUEEN CHARLOTTE sits with three Princesses; in another carriage with four horses are two more Princesses. There are also present with the Royal Party the LORD CHANCELLOR, LORD MULGRAVE, COUNT MUNSTER, and many other luminaries of fashion and influence.

The Review proceeds in dumb show; and the din of many bands mingles with the cheers. The turf behind the saluting-point is crowded with carriages and spectators on foot.

A SPECTATOR

And you've come to see the sight, like the King and myself? Well, one fool makes many. What a mampus o' folk it is here to-day! And what a time we do live in, between wars and wassailings, the ghost o' Boney, and King George in flesh and blood!

SECOND SPECTATOR

Yes. I wonder King George is let venture down on this coast, where he might be snapped up in a moment like a minnow by a her'n, so near as we be to the field of Boney's vagaries! Begad, he's as like to land here as anywhere. Gloucester Lodge could be surrounded, and

George and Charlotte carried off before he could put on his hat, or she her red cloak and pattens.

THIRD SPECTATOR

'Twould be no such joke to kidnap 'em as you think. Look at the frigates down there. Every night they are drawn up in a line across the mouth of the Bay, almost touching each other ; and ashore a double line of sentinels, well primed with beer and ammunition, one at the water's edge, and the other on the Esplanade, stretch along the whole front. Then close to the Lodge a guard is mounted after eight o'clock ; there be pickets on all the hills ; at the Harbour mouth is a battery of twenty four-pounders ; and over-right 'em a dozen six-pounders, and several howitzers. And next look at the size of the camp of horse and foot up here.

FIRST SPECTATOR

Everybody however was fairly gallied this week when the King went out yachting, meaning to be back for the theatre ; and the time passed, and it got dark, and the play couldn't begin, and eight or nine o'clock came, and never a sign of him. I don't know when 'a did land ; but 'twas said by all that it was a foolhardy pleasure to take.

FOURTH SPECTATOR

He's a very obstinate and comical old gentleman ; and by all account 'a wouldn't make port when asked to.

SECOND SPECTATOR

Lard, Lard, if 'a were nabbed, it wouldn't make a deal of difference ! We should have nobody to zing to, and play single-stick to, and grin at through horse-collars, that's true. And nobody to sign our few documents. But we should rub along some way, goodnow.

FIRST SPECTATOR

Step up on this barrow ; you can see better. The troopers now passing are the York Hussars—foreigners to a man, except the officers—the same regiment the two young Germans belonged to who were shot here four years ago. Now come the Light Dragoons ; what a time they take to get all past ! See, the King turns to speak to one of his notables. Well, well ! this day will be recorded in history.

SECOND SPECTATOR

Or another soon to follow it ! (He gazes over the Channel.) There's not a speck of

an enemy upon that shiny water yet ; but the Brest fleet is said to have put to sea, to act in concert with the army crossing from Boulogne ; and if so the French will soon be here ; when God save us all ! I've took to drinking neat, for, says I, one may as well have his innerds burnt out as shot out, and 'tis a good deal pleasanter for the man that owns 'em. They say that a cannon-ball knocked poor Jim Popple's maw right up into the futtock-shrouds at the Nile, where 'a hung like a nightcap out to dry. Much good to him his obeying his old mother's wish and refusing his allowance o' rum !

The bands play and the Review continues till past eleven o'clock. Then follows a sham fight. At noon precisely the royal carriages draw off the ground into the highway that leads down to the town and Gloucester Lodge, followed by other equipages in such numbers that the road is blocked. A multitude comes after on foot. Presently the vehicles manage to proceed to the watering-place, and the troops march away to the various camps as a sea-mist cloaks the perspective.

SCENE V

THE SAME. RAINBARROWS' BEACON,
EGDON HEATH

Night in mid-August. A lofty ridge of heathland reveals itself dimly, terminating in an abrupt slope, at the summit of which are three tumuli. On the sheltered

side of the most prominent of these stands a hut of turves with a brick chimney. In front are two ricks of fuel, one of heather and furze for quick ignition, the other of wood, for slow burning. Something in the feel of the darkness and in the personality of the spot imparts a sense of uninterrupted space around, the view by day extending from the cliffs of the Isle of Wight eastward to Blackdon Hill by Deadman's Bay westward, and south across the Valley of the From to the ridge that screens the Channel.

Two old men with pikes loom up, on duty as beacon-keepers beside the ricks.

FIRST OLD MAN

Now, Jems Purchess, once more mark my words. Black'on is the point we've to watch, and not Kingsbere; and I'll explain for why. If he do land anywhere hereabout 'twill be inside Deadman's Bay, and the signal will straightway come from Black'on. But there thou'st stand, glowing and staring with all thy eyes at Kingsbere! I tell 'ee what 'tis, Jem Purchess, your brain is softening; and you be getting too old for business of state like ours!

SECOND OLD MAN

You've let your tongue wrack your few rames of good breeding, John.

FIRST OLD MAN

The words of my Lord Lieutenant was, whenever you see Kingsbere-Hill Beacon fired to the eastward, or Black'on to the westward, light up; and keep your second fire burning for two hours. Was that our documents or was it not?

SECOND OLD MAN

I don't gainsay it. And so I keep my eye on Kingsbere, because that's most likely o' the two, says I.

FIRST OLD MAN

That shows the curious depths of your ignorance. However, I'll have patience, and say on. Didst ever larn geography?

SECOND OLD MAN

No. Nor no other corrupt practices.

FIRST OLD MAN

Tcht-tcht!—Well, I'll have patience, and put it to him in another form. Dost know the world is round—eh? I warrant dostn't!

SECOND OLD MAN

I warrant I do!

FIRST OLD MAN

How d'ye make that out, when th'st never been to school ?

SECOND OLD MAN

I larned it at church, thank God.

FIRST OLD MAN

Church ? What have God A'mighty got to do with profane knowledge ? Beware what you be saying, Jems Purchess !

SECOND OLD MAN

I say I did, whether or no. 'Twas the zingers up in gallery that I had it from. They busted out that strong with "the round world and they that dwell therein," that we common fokes down under could do no less than believe 'em.

FIRST OLD MAN

Canst be sharp enough in the wrong place as usual—I warrant canst ! However, I'll have patience with 'en, and say on !—Suppose, now, my hat is the world ; and there, as might be, stands the Camp of Belong, where Boney is. The world goes round, so, and Belong goes

round too. Twelve hours pass ; round goes the world still—so. Where's Belong now ?

A pause. Two other figures, a man's and a woman's, rise against the sky out of the gloom.

FIRST OLD MAN (shouldering his pike)

Who goes there ? Friend or foe, in the King's name !

WOMAN

Piece o' trumpery ! "Who goes" yourself ! What d'ye talk o', John Whiting ! Can't your eyes earn their living any longer, then, that you don't know your own neighbours ? 'Tis Private Cantle of the Locals and his wife Keziar, down at Bloom's-End—who else should it be !

FIRST OLD MAN (lowering his pike)

A form o' words, Mis'ess Cantle, no more ; ordained by his Majesty's Gover'nment to be spoke by all we on sworn duty for the defence o' the country. Strict watch and ward is our only horn of salvation in these times.—But, my dear woman, why ever have ye come lumbering up to Rainbarrows at this time o' night ?

WOMAN

We've been troubled wi' bad dreams, owing to the firing out at sea yesterday ; and

at last I could sleep no more, feeling sure that sommat boded of His coming. And I said to Cantle, I'll ray myself, and go up to Beacon, and ask if anything have been heard or seen to-night. And here we be.

FIRST OLD MAN

Not a sign or sound—all's as still as a churchyard. And how is your good man?

PRIVATE

Clk! I be all right! I was in the ranks, helping to keep the ground at the review by the King this week. We was a wonderful sight—wonderful! The King said so again and again.—Yes, there was he, and there was I, though naturally not daring to move a' eyebrow in the presence of Majesty. I have come home on a night's leave—off there again to-morrow. Boney's expected every day, thank God! Yes, our hopes are to be fulfilled soon, as we say in the army.

FIRST OLD MAN

There, there, Cantle; don't ye speak quite so large, and stand so over-upright. Your back is as holler as a fire-dog's. Do ye suppose that we on active service here don't know war news? Mind you don't go taking

to your heels when the next alarm comes, as you did at last year's.

PRIVATE

That had nothing to do with fighting, for I'm as bold as a lion when I'm up, and "Shoulder Fawlocks!" sounds as common as my own name to me. 'Twas—— (Lowering his voice) Have ye heard?

FIRST OLD MAN

To be sure we have.

PRIVATE

Ghastly, isn't it!

FIRST OLD MAN

Ghastly! Frightful!

SECOND OLD MAN (to Private)

He don't know what it is! That's his pride and puffery. What is it that's so ghastly—hey?

PRIVATE

Well, there, I can't tell it. 'Twas that that made the whole eighty of our company run away—though we be the bravest of the brave in natural jeopardies, or the little boys

wouldn't run after us and call us the "Bang-up-Locals."

WOMAN (in undertones)

I can tell you a word or two on't. It is about His victuals. They say that He lives upon human flesh, and has rashers o' baby every morning for breakfast—for all the world like the Cernel Giant in old ancient times!

SECOND OLD MAN

Ye can't believe all ye hear.

PRIVATE

I only believe half. And I only own—such in my challengeful character—that perhaps He do eat pagan infants when He's in the desert. But not Christian ones at home. Oh no—'tis too much!

✱

WOMAN

Whether or no, I sometimes—God forgie me!—laugh wi' horror at the queerness o't, till I am that weak I can hardly go round house. He should have the washing of 'em a few times; I warrant 'a wouldn't want to eat babies any more!

A silence, during which they gaze around at the dark dome of starless sky.

SECOND OLD MAN

There'll be a change in the weather soon, by the look o't. I can hear the cows moo in Froom Valley as if I were close to 'em, and the lantern at Max Turnpike is shining quite plain.

FIRST OLD MAN

Well, come in and taste a drop o' sommat we've got here, that will warm the cockles of your heart as ye wamble homealong. We housed eighty tubs here last night for them that shan't be named—landed at Lullwind Cove the night afore, though they had a narrow shave with the riding-officers this run.

They make towards the hut, when a light on the west horizon becomes visible, and quickly enlarges.

SECOND OLD MAN

He's come!

FIRST OLD MAN

Come he is, though you do say it! This, then, is the beginning of what England's waited for!

SECOND OLD MAN

Just what you was thanking God for by-now, Private Cattle.

PRIVATE

My meaning was——

WOMAN (simpering)

Oh that I hadn't married a fiery sojer, to make me bring fatherless children into the world, all through his dreadful calling! Why didn't a man of no sprawl content me! I feel as if I were smote hip and thigh in Jezreel!

FIRST OLD MAN (shouldering his pike)

We can't heed your innocent pratings any longer, good neighbours, being in the King's service, and a hot invasion on. Fall in, fall in, mate. Straight to the tinder-box. Quick march!

The old men hasten to the hut, and are heard striking a flint and steel. Returning with a lit lantern they ignite a wisp of furze, and with this set the first stack of fuel in a blaze. The private of the Locals and his wife hastily retreat by the light of the flaming beacon, under which the purple rotundities of the heath show like bronze, and the pits like the eye-sockets of a skull.

SPIRIT SINISTER

This is good, and spells blood. (To the Chorus of the Years) I assume that It means to let us carry out this invasion with pleasing slaughter, so as not to disappoint my hope?

SEMICHORUS I OF THE YEARS (aerial music)

*We carry out ? Nay, but should we
Ordain what bloodshed is to be !*

SEMICHORUS II

*The Immanent, that urgeth all,
Rules what may or may not befall !*

SEMICHORUS I

*Ere systemed suns were globed and lit
The slaughters of the race were writ,*

SEMICHORUS II

*And wasting wars, by land and sea,
Fixed, like all else, immutably !*

SPIRIT SINISTER

*Well ; be it so. My argument is that War
makes rattling good history ; but Peace is poor
reading. So I back Bonaparte for the reason
that he will give pleasure to posterity.*

SPIRIT OF THE PITIES

Gross hypocrite !

CHORUS OF THE YEARS

We comprehend him not.

The day breaks over the heathery upland, on which the beacon is still burning. The morning reveals the white surface of a highway which, coming from the royal watering-place beyond the hills, stretches towards the outskirts of the heath and passes away eastward.

DUMB SHOW

Moving figures and vehicles dot the surface of the road, all progressing in one direction, away from the coast. In the foreground the shapes appear as those of civilians, mostly on foot, but many in gigs and tradesmen's carts and on horseback. When they reach an intermediate hill some pause and look back; others enter on the next decline landwards without turning their heads.

From the opposite horizon numerous companies of volunteers, in the local uniform of red with green facings,¹ are moving coastwards in companies; as are also irregular bodies of pikemen without uniform; while on the upper slopes of the downs towards the shore regiments of the line are visible, with cavalry and artillery; all passing over to the coast.

At a signal from the Chief Intelligences two Phantoms of Rumour enter on the highway in the garb of country-men.

FIRST PHANTOM (to Pedestrians)

Whither so fast, good neighbours, and before breakfast, too? Empty bellies be bad to vamp on.

¹ These historic facings, which I believe won for the local (old 39th) regiment the nickname of "Green Linnets," have been changed for no apparent reason.

FIRST PEDESTRIAN (laden with a pack, and speaking breathlessly)

He's landed west'ard, out by Abbot's Beach. And if you have property you'll save it and yourselves, as we are doing !

SECOND PEDESTRIAN

All yesterday the firing at Boulogne
Was like the seven thunders heard in Heaven
When the fierce angel spoke. So did he
draw
Men's eyes that way, the while his thousand
boats
Full-manned, flat-bottomed for the shallowest
shore,
Dropped down to west, and crossed our
frontage here.
Seen from above they specked the water-
shine
As will a flight of swallows towards dim eve,
Descending on a smooth and loitering stream
To seek some eyot's sedge.

SECOND PHANTOM

*We are sent to enlighten you and ease your
souls.
Even now a courier canters to the port
To check the baseless scare.*

FIRST PEDESTRIAN (to second Pedestrian)

These be inland men who, I warrant 'ee, don't know a lerret from a lighter? Let's take no heed of such, comrade; and hurry on!

FIRST PHANTOM

*Will you not hear
That what was seen behind the midnight mist,
Their oar-blades tossing twinkles to the moon,
Was but a fleet of fishing-craft belated
By reason of the vastness of their haul?*

FIRST PEDESTRIAN

Hey? And d'ye know it?—Now I look back to the top o' Rudgeway the folk do seem as come to a pause there.—Be this true, never again do I stir my stumps for any alarm short of the Day of Judgment! Nine times has my rheumatical rest been broke in these last three years by hues and cries of Boney upon us. 'Od rot the feller; now he's made a fool of me once more, till my inside is like a wash-tub, what wi' being so gallied, and running so leery!—But how if you be one of the enemy, sent to sow these tares, so to speak it, these false tidings, and coax us into a fancied safety? Hey, neighbours? I don't, after all, care for this story!

SECOND PEDESTRIAN

Onwards again !
If Boney's come, 'tis best to be away ;
And if he's not, why, we've a holiday !

[Exeunt Pedestrians.]

The Spirits of Rumour vanish, while the scene seems to become involved in the smoke from the beacon, and slowly disappears.¹

¹ The remains of the lonely hut occupied by the beacon-keepers, consisting of some half-buried brickbats, and a little mound of peat overgrown with moss, are still visible on the elevated spot referred to.

ACT THIRD

SCENE I

BOULOGNE. THE CHÂTEAU AT
PONT-DE-BRIQUES

A room in the Château, which is used as the Imperial quarters. The EMPEROR NAPOLÉON and M. GASPARD MONGE, the mathematician and philosopher, seated at breakfast.

Enter the officer in attendance.

OFFICER

Monsieur the Admiral Decrès awaits
A moment's audience with your Majesty,
Or now, or later.

NAPOLÉON

Bid him come in at once—
At last Villeneuve has raised the Brest blockade!

Enter DECRÈS.

What of the squadrons' movements, good
Decrès?
Brest opened, and all sailing Channelwards,
Like swans into a creek at feeding-time?

DECRÈS

Such news was what I'd hoped, your Majesty,
To send across this daybreak. But events
Have proved intractable, it seems, of late ;
And hence I haste in person to report
The featless facts that just have dashed
my——

NAPOLÉON (darkening)

Well?

DECRÈS

Sire, at the very juncture when the fleets
Sailed out from Ferrol, fever raged aboard
“L'Achille” and “l'Algeciras” : later on,
Mischief assailed our Spanish comrades' ships ;
Several ran foul of neighbours ; whose new
hurts,
Being added to their innate clumsiness,
Gave hap the upper hand ; and in quick
course
Demoralized the whole ; until Villeneuve,
Judging that Calder now with Nelson rode,
And prescient of unparalleled disaster
If he pushed on in so disjoint a trim,
Bowed to the inevitable ; and thus, perforce,
Leaving to other opportunity
Brest and the Channel scheme, with vast regret
Steered southward into Cadiz.

NAPOLÉON (having risen from the table)

What !—Is, then,
My scheme of years to be disdained and
dashed
By this man's like, a wretched moral coward,
Whom you must needs foist on me as one fit
For full command in pregnant enterprise !

MONGE (aside)

I'm one too many here ! Let me step out
Till this black squall blows over. Poor
Decrès.

Would that this precious project, disinterred
From naval archives of King Louis' reign,
Had ever lingered fusting where 'twas found !¹

[Exit MONGE.]

NAPOLÉON

To help a friend you foul a country's
fame !—

Decrès, not only chose you this Villeneuve,
But you have nourished secret sour opinions
Akin to his, and thereby helped to scathe

¹ "Le projet existe encore aux archives de la marine que Napoléon consultait incessamment : il sentait que cette marine depuis Louis XIV. avait fait de grandes choses : le plan de l'Expédition d'Egypte et de la descente en Angleterre se trouvaient au ministère de la marine."—CAPEFIGUE : *L'Europe pendant le Consulat et l'Empire.*

As stably based a project as this age
Has sunned to ripeness. Ever the French
marine

Have you decried, ever contrived to bring
Despair into the fleet! Why, this Villeneuve,
Your man, this rank incompetent, this
traitor—

Of whom I asked no more than fight and lose,
Provided he detained the enemy—

A frigate is too great for his command!
What shall be said of one who, at a breath,
When a few casual sailors find them sick,
When falls a broken boom or slitten sail,
When rumour hints that Calder's tubs and
Nelson's

May join, and bob about in company,
Is straightway paralyzed, and doubles back
On all his ripened plans!—

Bring him, ay, bodily; hale him out from Cadiz,
Compel him up the Channel by main force,
And, having doffed him his supreme command,
Give the united squadrons to Ganteaume!

DECRÈS

Your Majesty, while umbraged, righteously,
By an event my tongue dragged dry to tell,
Makes my hard situation over-hard
By your ascription to the actors in't
Of motives such and such. 'Tis not for me
To answer these reproaches, Sire, and ask

Why years-long mindfulness of France's fame
In things marine should win no confidence.
I speak ; but am unable to convince !

True is it that this man has been my friend
Since boyhood made us schoolmates ; and I
say

That he would yield the heel-drops of his
heart

With joyful readiness this day, this hour,
To do his country service. Yet no less
Is it his drawback that he sees too far.

And there are times, Sire, when a shorter
sight

Charms Fortune more. A certain sort of
bravery

Some people have—to wit, this same Lord
Nelson—

Which is but fatuous faith in one's own star
Sworn to the very verge of childishness,
(Smugly disguised as putting trust in God,
A habit with these English folk) ; whereby
A headstrong blindness to contingencies
Carries the actor on, and serves him well
In some nice issues clearer sight would mar.
Such eyeless bravery Villeneuve has not ;
But, Sire, he is no coward.

NAPOLÉON

Well, have it so !—What are we going to do ?
My brain has only one wish—to succeed !

DECRÈS

My voice wanes weaker with you, Sire ; is
nought !

Yet these few words, as Minister of Marine,
I'll venture now.—My process would be
thus :—

Our projects for a junction of the fleets
Being well-discerned and read by every eye
Through long postponement, England is pre-
pared.

I would recast them. Later in the year
Form sundry squadrons of this massive one,
Harass the English till the winter time,
Then rendezvous at Cadiz ; where leave half
To catch the enemy's eye and call their
cruizers,

While, rounding Scotland with the other half,
You make the Channel by the eastern strait,
Cover the passage of our army-boats,
And plant the blow.

NAPOLÉON

And what if they perceive
Our Scottish route, and meet us eastwardly ?

DECRÈS

I have thought of it, and planned a counter-
move ;

I'll write the scheme more clearly and at
length,
And send it hither to your Majesty.

NAPOLÉON

Do so forthwith ; and send me in Daru.

Exit DECRÈS. Re-enter MONGE.

Our breakfast, Monge, to-day has been cut
short,
And those discussions on the ancient tongues
Wherein you shine, must yield to modern
moils.
Nay, hasten not away ; though feeble wills,
Incompetence, ay, imbecility,
In some who feign to serve the cause of
France,
Do make me other than myself just now !—
Ah—here's Daru.

DARU enters. MONGE takes his leave.

Daru, sit down and write. Yes, here, at
once,
This room will serve me now. What think
you, eh ?
Villeneuve has just turned tail and run to
Cadiz,
So quite postponed — perhaps even over-
thrown—
My long-conned project against yonder shore

As 'twere a juvenile's snow-built device
But made for melting ! Think of it, Daru,—
My God, my God, how can I talk thereon !
A plan well judged, well charted, well up-
reared,
To end in nothing ! . . . Sit you down and
write.

NAPOLÉON walks up and down, and resumes after a
silence :

Write this.—A volte-face 'tis indeed !—Write,
write !

DARU (holding pen to paper)

I wait, your Majesty.

NAPOLÉON

First Bernadotte—

Yes ; “ Bernadotte moves out from Hanover
Through Hesse upon Würzburg and the
Danube.—

Marmont from Holland bears along the
Rhine,

And joins at Mainz and Würzburg Berna-
dotte . . .

While these prepare their routes the army
here

Will turn its back on Britain's tedious shore,
And, closing up with Augereau at Brest,
Set out full force due eastward. . . .

By the Black Forest feign a straight attack,
The while our purpose is to skirt its left,
Meet in Franconia Bernadotte and Marmont ;
Traverse the Danube somewhat down from

Ulm ;

Entrap the Austrian columns by their rear ;
Surround them, take them ; march upon
Vienna,

Where, Austria settled, I engage the Tsar,
While Masséna detains in Italy
The Archduke Charles.

Foreseeing such might shape,
Each high- and by-way to the Danube hence
I have of late had measured, mapped, and
judged ;

Such spots as suit for dépôts chosen and
marked ;

Each regiment's daily pace and bivouac
Writ tablewise for ready reference ;
All which itineraries are sent herewith."

So shall I crush the two gigantic sets
Upon the Empire, now grown imminent.

—Let me reflect.—First Bernadotte——

But nay,

The courier to Marmont must go first.

Well, well.—The order of our march from
hence

I will advise. . . . My knock at George's door
With bland inquiries why his royal hand
Withheld due answer to my friendly lines,
And tossed the irksome business to his clerks,

Is thus perforce delayed. But not for long.
Instead of crossing, thitherward I go
By roundabout contrivance not less sure !

DARU

I'll bring the writing to your Majesty.

NAPOLÉON and DARU go out severally.

CHORUS OF THE YEARS (aerial music)

*Recording Angel, trace
This bold campaign his thought has spun apace—
One that bids fair for immortality
Among the earthlings—if immortal deeds
May be ascribed to so extemporary
And transient a race !
It will be called, in rhetoric and rhyme,
As son to sire succeeds,
A model for the tactics of all time ;
"The Great Campaign of Eighteen-hundred-
five,"
By millions of mankind not yet alive.*

SCENE II

THE FRONTIERS OF UPPER AUSTRIA AND
BAVARIA

A view of the country from mid-air, at a point south
of the River Inn, which is seen as a silver thread, winding
northward between its junction with the Salza and the

Danube, and forming the boundaries of the two countries. The Danube shows itself as a crinkled satin riband, stretching from left to right in the far background of the picture, the Inn discharging its waters into the larger river.

DUMB SHOW

A vast Austrian army creeps dully along the mid-distance, in the form of detached masses and columns of a whitish cast. The columns insensibly draw nearer to each other, and are seen to be converging from the east upon the banks of the Inn aforesaid.

A RECORDING ANGEL (in recitative)

*This movement as of molluscs on a leaf,
Which from our vantage here we scan afar,
Is one conducted by the famous Mack
To countercheck Napoléon, still believed
To be intent on England from Boulogne,
And heedless of such rallies in his rear.
Mack's enterprise is now to cross Bavaria—
Beneath us stretched in ripening summer peace
As field unwonted for these ugly jars—
And seize on Ulm, past Swabia leftward there.
Outraged Bavaria, simmering in disquiet
At Munich down behind us, Isar-fringed,
And torn between his fair wife's hate of
France
And his own itch to gird at Austrian bluff
For riding roughshod through his territory,
Wavers from this to that. The while Time
hastes*

*The eastward streaming of Napoléon's host,
As soon we see.*

The silent insect-creep of the Austrian columns towards the banks of the Inn continues to be seen till the view fades to nebulousness and dissolves.

SCENE III

BOULOGNE. THE ST. OMER ROAD

It is a morning at the end of August, and the road stretches out of the town eastward.

The divisions of the "Army-for-England" are making preparations to march. Some portions are in marching order. Bands strike up, and the regiments start on their journey towards the Rhine and Danube. Bonaparte and his officers watch the movements from an eminence. The soldiers, as they pace along under their eagles with beaming eyes, sing "Le Chant du Départ," and other martial songs, shout "Vive l'Empereur!" and babble of repeating the days of Italy, Egypt, Marengo, and Hohenlinden.

NAPOLÉON

To England afterwards!

CHORUS OF INTELLIGENCES (aerial music)

As it may be!

The scene as it lingers exhibits the gradual diminishing of the troops along the roads through the undulating August landscape, and the disappearance of each marching mass over the eastern horizon.

ACT FOURTH

SCENE I

KING GEORGE'S WATERING-PLACE, SOUTH
WESSEX

A sunny day in autumn. A room in the red-brick royal residence known as Gloucester Lodge.¹

At a front triple-lighted window stands a telescope on a tripod. Through the open middle sash is visible the crescent-curved expanse of the Bay as a sheet of brilliant translucent green, on which ride vessels of war at anchor. On the left hand white cliffs stretch away till they terminate in St. Aldhelm's Head, and form a background to the level water-line on that side. In the centre are the open sea and blue sky. A near headland rises on the right, surmounted by a battery, over which appears the remoter bald grey brow of the Isle of Slingsers.

In the foreground yellow sands spread smoothly, whereon there are sundry temporary erections for athletic sports; and closelier runs an esplanade on which a fashionable crowd is promenading. Immediately outside the Lodge are companies of soldiers, groups of officers, and sentries.

¹ This weather-beaten old building, though now an hotel, is but little altered.

Within the room the KING and PITT are discovered.
The KING's eyes show traces of recent inflammation,
and the Minister has a wasted look.

KING

Yes, yes ; I grasp your reasons, Mr. Pitt,
And grant you audience gladly. More than
that,

Your visit to this shore is apt and timely,
And if it do but yield you needful rest
From fierce debates, and other strains of office
Which you and I in common have to bear,
'Twill be well earned. The bathing is un-
matched

Elsewhere in Europe,—see its mark on me !—
The air like liquid life.—But of this matter :
What argue these late movements seen
abroad ?

What of the country now the session's past ;
What of the country, eh ? and of the war ?

PITT

The thoughts I have laid before your Majesty
Would make for this, in sum :—

That Mr. Fox, Lord Grenville, and their
friends,

Be straightway asked to join. With Melville
gone,

With Sidmouth, and with Buckinghamshire
too,

The steerage of affairs has been of late
Somewhat provisional, as you, sir, know,
With stop-gap functions thrust on offices
Which can be tolerated but a while.
So, for the weighty reasons I have urged,
I do repeat my most respectful hope
To win your Majesty's ungrudged assent
To what I have proposed.

KING

But nothing, sure,
Has been more plain to all, dear Mr. Pitt,
Than that your own proved energy and scope
Is ample, without aid, to carry on
Our just crusade against this Corsican?
These helps we need not. Pray you think
upon't,
And speak to me again.—We've had alarms
Within these few weeks past, as you may
know,
That Bonaparte had landed close hereby.

PITT

Such rumours come as regularly as harvest.

KING

And now he has left Boulogne with all his
host?
Was it his object to invade at all,
Or was his vast assemblage here a blind?

PITT

Undoubtedly he meant invasion, sir,
Had fortune favoured. He may try it yet.
And, as I said, could we but close with Fox——

KING

But, but ;—I ask, what is his object now ?
Lord Nelson's Captain—Hardy—whose old
home

Stands in a peaceful vale hard by us here—
Who came two weeks ago to see his friends,
I talked to in this room a lengthy while.
He says our navy still is in the dark
As to the aims by sea of Bonaparte
Now the Boulogne attempt has fizzled out,
And what he schemes afloat with Spain
combined.

The "Victory" lay that fortnight at
Spithead,

And Nelson since has gone aboard and sailed ;
Yes, sailed again. The "Royal Sovereign"
follows,

And others her. Nelson was hailed and
cheered

To huskiness while leaving Southsea shore,
Gentle and simple wildly thronging round.

PITT

Ay, sir. Young women hung upon his arm,
And old ones blessed, and stroked him with
their hands.

KING

Ah—you have heard, of course. God speed him, Pitt.

PITT

Amen, amen !

KING

I read it as a thing
Of signal augury, and one which bodes
Heaven's confidence in me and in my line,
That I should rule as King in such an age. . . .
Well, well.—So this new march of Bonaparte's
Was unexpected, forced perchance on him ?

PITT

It may be so, your Majesty ; it may.
Last noon the Austrian ambassador,
Whom I consulted ere I posted down,
Assured me that his latest papers state
That General Mack and eighty thousand men
Have made good speed across Bavaria
To wait the French and give them check at
Ulm,
That fortress-frontier-town, entrenched and
walled,
A place long chosen as a vantage-point
Whereon to encounter them as they outwind
From the blind shades and baffling green defiles
Of the Black Forest, worn with wayfaring.

Here Mack will intercept his agile foe
Hasting to meet the Russians in Bohemia,
And cripple him, if not annihilate.

Thus now, sir, opens out this Great
Alliance
Of Russia, Austria, England, whereto I
Have lent my earnest efforts through long
months,
And the realm gives her money, ships, and
men.—

It claps a muffler round this Cock's steel spurs,
And leaves me sanguine on his overthrow.
But then,—this coalition of resources
Demands a strong and active Cabinet
To aid your Majesty's directive hand ;
And thus I urge again the said additions.—
These brilliant intellects of the other side
Who stand by Fox. With us conjoined,
they——

KING

What, what, again—in face of my sound
reasons !

Believe me, Pitt, you underrate yourself ;
You do not need such aid. The splendid feat
Of banding Europe in a righteous cause
That you have achieved, so soon to put to
shame

This wicked bombardier of dynasties
That rule by right Divine, goes straight to
prove

We had best continue as we have begun,
And call no partners to our management.
To fear dilemmas horning up ahead
Is not your wont. Nay, nay, now, Mr. Pitt,
I must be firm. And if you love your King
You'll goad him not so rashly to embrace
This Fox-and-Grenville faction and its friends.
Rather than Fox, why, give me civil war!
Hey, what? But what besides?

PITT

I say besides, sir, . . . nothing!

A silence.

KING

The Chancellor's here, and many friends
of mine: Lady Winchelsea, Lord and Lady
Chesterfield, Lady Bulkeley, General Garth,
and Mr. Phipps the oculist—not the least
important to me. He is a worthy and a skilful
man. My eyes, he says, are as marvellously
improved in durability as I know them to be
in power. I have arranged to go to-morrow
with the Princesses, and the Dukes of Cumber-
land, Sussex, and Cambridge (who are also
here) for a ride on the Ridgeway, and through
the Camp on the downs. You'll accompany
us there?

PITT

I am honoured by your Majesty's commands.

PITT looks resignedly out of the window.

What curious structure do I see outside, sir ?

KING

It's but a stage, a type of all the world. The burgesses have arranged it in my honour. At six o'clock this evening there are to be combats at single-stick to amuse the folk ; four guineas the prize for the man who breaks most heads. Afterwards there is to be a grinning match through horse-collars—a very humorous sport which I must stay here and witness ; for I am interested in whatever entertains my subjects.

PITT

Not one in all the land but knows it, sir.

KING

Now, Mr. Pitt, you must require repose ;
Consult your own convenience then, I beg,
On when you leave.

PITT

I thank your Majesty.

He departs as one whose purpose has failed, and the scene shuts.

SCENE II

BEFORE THE CITY OF ULM

A prospect of the city from the east, showing in the foreground a low-lying marshy country bounded in mid-distance by the banks of the Danube, which, bordered by poplars and willows, flows across the picture from the left to the Elchingen Bridge near the right of the scene, and is backed by irregular heights and terraces of espaliered vines. Between these and the river stands the city; crowded with old gabled houses and surrounded by walls, bastions, and a ditch, all the edifices being dominated by the nave and tower of the huge Gothic Münster.

On the most prominent of the heights at the back—the Michaelsberg—to the upper-right of the view, is encamped the mass of the Austrian army, amid half-finished entrenchments. Advanced posts of the same are seen south-east of the city, not far from the advanced corps of the French Grand-Army under SOULT, MARMONT, MURAT, LANNES, NEY, and DUPONT, which occupy in a semicircle the whole breadth of the flat landscape in front, and extend across the river to higher ground on the right hand of the panorama.

Heavy mixed drifts of rain and snow are descending impartially on the French and on the Austrians, the downfall nearly blotting out the latter on the hills. A chill October wind wails across the country, and the poplars yield slantingly to the gusts.

DUMB SHOW

Drenched peasants are busily at work, fortifying the heights of the Austrian position in the face of the

enemy. Vague companies of Austrians above, and of the French below, hazy and indistinct in the thick atmosphere, come and go without apparent purpose near their respective lines.

Closer at hand NAPOLÉON, in his familiar blue-grey overcoat, rides hither and thither with his marshals, haranguing familiarly the bodies of soldiery as he passes them, and observing and pointing out the disposition of the Austrians to his companions.

Thicker sheets of rain fly across as the murk of evening increases, which at length entirely obscures the prospect, and cloaks its bleared lights and fires.

SCENE III

ULM. WITHIN THE CITY

The interior of the Austrian headquarters on the following morning. A tempest raging without.

GENERAL MACK, haggard and anxious, the ARCHDUKE FERDINAND, PRINCE SCHWARZENBERG, GENERAL JELLACHICH, GENERALS RIESC, BIBERACH, and other field officers discovered, seated at a table with a map spread out before them. A wood fire blazes between tall andirons in a yawning fireplace. At every more than usually boisterous gust of wind the smoke flaps into the room.

MACK

The accursèd cunning of our adversary
Confounds all codes of honourable war,
Which ever have held as granted that the
track

Of armies bearing hither from the Rhine—

Whether in peace or strenuous invasion—
Should pierce the Schwarzwald, and through
 Memmingen,
And meet us in our front. But he must
 wind
And corkscrew meanly round, where foot
 of man
Can scarce find pathway, stealing up to us
Thiefwise, by our back door! Nevertheless,
If English war-fleets be abreast Boulogne,
As these deserters tell, and ripe to land there,
It destines Bonaparte to pack him back
Across the Rhine again. We've but to wait,
And see him go.

ARCHDUKE

But who shall say if these bright tales be
 true?

MACK

Even then, small matter, your Imperial
 Highness,
The Russians near us daily, and must soon—
Ay, far within the eight days I have named—
Be operating to untie this knot,
If we hold on.

ARCHDUKE

Conjectures these—no more
I stomach not such waiting. Neither hope

Has kernel in it. I and my cavalry
With caution, when the shadows fall to-night,
Can bore some hole in this engirdlement ;
Outpass the gate north-east ; join General
 Werneck,
And somehow cut our way Bohemia-wards :
'Tis worth the hazard, in our straitened case.

MACK (firmly)

The body of our force stays here with me.
And I am much surprised, your Highness,
 much,
You mark not how destructive 'tis to part !
If we wait on, for certain we should wait
In our full strength, compacted, undispersed
By such partition as your Highness plans.

SCHWARZENBERG

There's truth in urging we should not divide,
But weld more closely.—Yet why stay at all ?
Methinks there's but one sure salvation left,
To wit, that herefrom we conjunctly march,
And with much circumspection, towards the
 Tyrol.

The subtle often rack their wits in vain—
Assay whole magazines of strategy,
To shun ill loomings deemed insuperable,
When simple souls by stumbling up thereto
Find the grim shapes but air. But let us
 grant

That the investing French so ring us in
As to leave not a span for such exploit ;
Then go we—throw ourselves upon their
steel,
And batter through, or die !—
What say you, Generals? Speak your minds,
I pray.

JELLACHICH

I favour marching out—the Tyrol way.

RIESCH

Bohemia best ! The route thereto is open.

ARCHDUKE

My course is chosen. 'Tis a black campaign,
Which Pitt's alarmed dispatches pricked us to,
All unforeseeing ! Any risk for me
Rather than court humiliation here !

MACK has risen during the latter remarks, walked to the window, and looked out at the rain. He returns with an air of embarrassment.

MACK (to Archduke)

It is my privilege firmly to submit
That your Imperial Highness undertake
No venturous vaulting into risks unknown.—

Assume that you, Sire, as you have proposed,
 With your light regiments and the cavalry,
 Detach yourself from us, to scoop a way
 By circuits northwards through the Rauhe
 Alps

And Herdenheim, into Bohemia :
 Reports all point that you will be attacked,
 Enveloped, borne on to capitulate.
 What worse can happen here ?—
 Remember, Sire, the Emperor deposes me,
 Should such a clash arise as has arisen,
 To exercise supreme authority.
 The honour of our arms, our race, demands
 That none of your Imperial Highness' line
 Be pounded prisoner by this vulgar foe,
 Who is not France, but an adventurer
 Imposing on that country for his gain.

ARCHDUKE

I amply recognize the drear disgrace
 Involving Austria if this upstart chief
 Should of his cunning seize and hold in pawn
 A royal-lineaged son, whose ancestors
 Root on the primal rocks of history.

SPIRIT IRONIC

*Note that. Five years, and legal brethren
 they—
 This feudal treasure and the upstart man !*

ARCHDUKE

But it seems clear to me that loitering here
Is full as like to compass our surrender
As moving hence. And ill it therefore suits
The mood of one of my high temperature
To pause inactive while await me means
Of desperate cure for these so desperate ills !

[The ARCHDUKE FERDINAND goes out.

A troubled silence follows, during which the gusts
call into the chimney, and raindrops spit on the fire.

SCHWARZENBERG

The Archduke bears him shrewdly in this
course.

We may as well look matters in the face,
And that we are cooped and cornered is most
clear ;

Clear is it, too, that but a miracle
Can work to loose us ! I have stoutly held
That this man's three years' ostentatious
scheme

To fling his army on the tempting shores
Of our allies the English was a—well—
Scarce other than a trick of thimble-rig
To still us into false security.

JELLACHICH

Well, I know nothing. None needs list to
me.

But, on the whole, to southward seems the
course
For plunging, all in force, immediately.

Another pause.

SPIRIT SINISTER

*The Will throws Mack again in agitation :
'Tis good what he'll say now !*

SPIRIT OF THE PITIES

*Nay, hard one, nay ;
The clouds weep for him !*

SPIRIT SINISTER

*If he must he must ;
And 'tis good antic at a vacant time.*

MACK goes restlessly to the door, and is heard
pacing about the vestibule, and questioning the aides
and other officers gathered there.

A GENERAL

He wavers like this smoke-wreath that
inclines
Now north, now south, as the storm-currents
rule !

MACK (returning)

Bring that deserter hither once again.

A French soldier is brought in, blindfolded and guarded. The bandage is removed.

Well, tell us what he says.

AN OFFICER (after speaking to the prisoner
in French)

He still repeats
That the whole body of the British strength
Is even now descending on Boulogne,
And that self-preservation must, of need,
Clear us from Bonaparte ere many days,
Who even now is moving.

MACK

Still retain him.

He walks to the fire. The soldier is taken out.

JELLACHICH (bending over the map in
argument with RIESCH)

I much prefer our self-won information ;
And if we have Marshal Soult at Landsberg
here,
(Which seems to be the truth, despite this
man,)
And Dupont hard upon us at Albeck,
With Ney not far from Günzburg ; some-
where here,
Or further down the river, lurking Lannes,
Our game's to draw off southward—if we can.

MACK

I have it. This we'll do. You, Jellachich,
Unite with Spangen's troops at Memmingen,
To fend off mischief there. And you, Riesc,
Will make your utmost haste to occupy
The bridge and upper ground at Elchingen,
And all along the left bank of the stream,
Till you observe whereon to concentrate
And sever their connections. I couch here,
And hold the city till the Russians come.

A GENERAL (in a low voice)

Disjunction seems of all expedients worst :
If any stay, then stay should every man,
Gather, inlace, and close up hip to hip,
And perk and bristle hedgehog-like with
spines !

MACK

The conference is ended, friends, I say,
And orders will be issued here forthwith.

Guns heard.

AN OFFICER

Surely that's from the Michaelsberg above us ?

MACK

Never care. Here we stay. In five more days
The Russians hail, and we regain our bays.

[Exeunt severally.]

SCENE IV

BEFORE ULM. THE SAME DAY

A high wind prevails, and rain falls in torrents. An elevated terrace near Elchingen forms the foreground.

DUMB SHOW

From the terrace BONAPARTE surveys and dictates operations against the entrenched heights of the Michaelsberg that rise in the middle distance on the right above the city. Through the gauze of descending waters the French soldiery can be discerned climbing to the attack under NEY.

They slowly advance, recede, re-advance, halt. A time of suspense follows. Then they are seen in a state of irregular movement, even confusion; but in the end they carry the heights with the bayonet.

Below the spot whereon NAPOLÉON and his staff are gathered, glistening wet and plastered with mud, obtrudes on the left the village of Elchingen, now in the hands of the French. Its white-walled monastery, its bridge over the Danube, recently broken by the enemy under NEY, wear a desolated look, and the stream, which is swollen by the rainfall and rasped by the storm, seems wanly to sympathize.

Anon shells are dropped by the French from the summits they have gained into the city below. A bomb from an Austrian battery falls near NAPOLÉON, and in bursting raises a fountain of mud. The Emperor retreats with his officers to a less conspicuous position.

Meanwhile LANNES advances from a position near NAPOLÉON till his columns reach the top of the Frauenberg hard by. The united corps of LANNES and NEY

descend on the inner slope of the heights towards the city walls, in the rear of the retreating Austrians. One of the French columns scales a bastion, but NAPOLÉON orders the assault to be discontinued, and with the wane of day the spectacle disappears.

SCENE V

THE SAME. THE MICHAELSBERG

A chilly but rainless noon three days later. At the back of the scene, northward, rise the Michaelsberg heights ; below stretches the panorama of the city and the Danube. On a secondary eminence forming a spur of the upper hill, a fire of logs is burning, the foremost group beside it being NAPOLÉON and his staff, the latter in gorgeous uniform, the former in his shabby greatcoat and plain turned-up hat, walking to and fro with his hands behind him, and occasionally stopping to warm himself. The French infantry are drawn up in a dense array at the back of these.

The whole Austrian garrison of Ulm marches out of the city gate opposite NAPOLÉON. GENERAL MACK is at the head, followed by GIULAY, GOTTESHEIM, KLENAU, LICHTENSTEIN, and many other officers, who advance to BONAPARTE and deliver their swords.

MACK

Behold me, Sire. Mack the unfortunate !

NAPOLÉON

War, General, ever has its ups and downs,
And you must take the better and the worse,

As impish chance or destiny ordains.
Come near and warm you here. A glowing
fire
Is life on these depressing, mired, moist days
Of smitten leaves down-dropping clammily,
And toadstools like the putrid lungs of men.

(To his lieutenants)

Cause them to stand to right and left of me.

The Austrian officers arrange themselves as directed, and the body of the Austrians now file past their Conqueror, laying down their arms as they approach ; some with angry gestures and words, others in moody silence.

Listen, I pray you, Generals gathered here.
I tell you frankly that I know not why
Your master wages this wild war with me.
I know not what he seeks by such injustice,
Unless to give me practice in my trade—
That of a soldier—whereto I was bred :
Deemed he my craft might slip from me,
unplied ?
Let him now own me still a dab therein !

MACK

Permit me, your Imperial Majesty,
To speak one word in answer ; which is this,
No war was wished for by my Emperor :
Russia constrained him to it !

NAPOLÉON

If that be,

You are no more a European power.—
I would point out to him that my resources
Are not confined to these my musters here ;
My prisoners of war, in route for France,
Will see some marks of my resources there!
Two hundred thousand volunteers, right fit,
Will join my standards at a single nod,
And in six weeks prove soldiers to the bone,
Whilst your recruits, compulsion's scavengings,
Can scarce become sound warriors in long
years.

But I want nothing on this Continent :
The English only are my enemies.
Ships, colonies, and commerce I desire,
Yea, therewith to advantage you as me.
Let me then charge your Emperor, my
brother,
To turn his feet the shortest way to peace.—
All states must have an end, the weak, the
strong ;
Ay ; even may fall the dynasty of Lorraine !

The filing past and laying down of arms by the
Austrian army continues with monotonous regularity,
as if it would never end.

NAPOLÉON (in a murmur, after a while)

Well, what cares England ! She has won
her game ;
I have unlearned to threaten her from Boulogne.

Her gold it is that forms the weft of this
 Fair tapestry of armies marshalled here !
 Likewise of Russia's, drawing steadily nigh.
 But they may see what these see, by and by.

SPIRIT OF THE YEARS

*So let him speak, the while we clearly sight him
 Moved like a figure on a lantern-slide.
 Which, much amazing uninitiate eyes,
 The all-compelling crystal pane but drags
 Whither the showman wills.*

SPIRIT IRONIC

*And yet, my friend,
 The Will Itself might smile at this collapse *
 Of Austria's men-at-arms, so drolly done ;
 Even as, in your phantasmagoric show,
 The deft manipulator of the slide
 Might smile at his own art.*

CHORUS OF THE YEARS (aerial music)

*Ah, no : ah, no !
 It is impassible as glacial snow.—
 Within the Great Unshaken
 These painted shapes awaken
 A lesser thrill than doth the gentle lave
 Of yonder bank by Danube's wandering wave
 Within the Schwarzwald heights that give it
 flow !*

SPIRIT OF THE PITIES

*But O, the intolerable antilogy
Of making figments feel !*

SPIRIT IRONIC

Logic's in that.

It does not, I must own, quite play the game.

CHORUS OF IRONIC SPIRITS (aerial music)

*And this day wins for Ulm a shady fame,
Which centuries shall not bleach from her old
name !*

The procession of Austrians continues till the scene is hidden by clouds.

SCENE VI

LONDON. SPRING GARDENS

Before LORD MALMESBURY's house, on a Sunday morning in the same autumn. Idlers pause and gather in the background.

PITT enters, and meets LORD MULGRAVE.

MULGRAVE

Good day, Pitt. Ay, these leaves that skim
the ground
With withered voices, hint that sunshine-
time
Is well-nigh past.—And so the game's begun

Between him and the Austro-Russian force,
As second movement in the faceabout
From Boulogne shore, with which he has
hocussed us?—

What has been heard on't? Have they
clashed as yet?

PITT

The Emperor Francis, partly at my instance,
Has thrown the chief command on General
Mack,

A man most capable and far of sight.
He centres by the Danube-bank at Ulm,
A town well-walled, and firm for leaning on
To intercept the French in their advance
From the Black Forest towards the Russian
troops

Approaching from the east. If Bonaparte
Sustain his marches at the break-neck speed
That all report, they must have met ere now.
—There is a rumour . . . which I don't believe!

MULGRAVE

You still have faith in Mack as strategist?
There have been doubts of his far-sightedness.

PITT (hastily)

I know, I know. — I am calling here at
Malmesbury's
At a somewhat unceremonious time
To ask his help to translate this Dutch print

The post has brought. Malmesbury is great
at Dutch,
Learning it long at Leyden, years ago.

He draws a newspaper from his pocket, unfolds it,
and glances it down.

There's news here unintelligible to me
Upon the very matter! You'll come in?

They call at LORD MALMESBURY'S. He meets them
in the hall, and welcomes them with an apprehensive
look of foreknowledge.

PITT

Pardon this early call. The packet's in,
And brings me this unreadable Dutch paper,
So, as the offices are closed to-day,
I have brought it round to you.

(Handing the paper.)

What does it say?
For God's sake, read it out. You know the
tongue.

MALMESBURY (with hesitation)

I have glanced it through already—more than
once—

A copy having reached me, too, just now . . .
We are in the presence of a great disaster!
See here. It says that Mack, encamped in
Ulm

By Bonaparte — from four sides closing
round—

Capitulated, and with all his force
Laid down his arms before his conqueror.

PITT's face changes. A silence.

MULGRAVE

Outrageous ! Ignominy unparalleled !

PITT

By God, my lord, these statements must be
false !

These foreign prints are trustless as Cheap
Jack

Dumfounding yokels at a country fair.

I heed no word of it.—Impossible.

What ! Eighty thousand Austrians, nigh in
touch

With Russia's levies that Kutúzof leads,
To lay down arms before the war's begun.
'Tis too much !

MALMESBURY

But I fear it is too true !

Note the assevered source of the report—
One beyond thought of minters of mock tales.
The writer adds that military wits
Cry that the Little Corporal now makes war
In a new way, using his soldiers' legs

And not their arms, to bring him victory.
Ha-ha ! The joke must sting the Corporal's
foes.

PITT (after a pause)

O vacillating Prussia ! Had she moved,
Had she but planted one foot firmly down,
All this had been averted.—I must go.
'Tis sure, 'tis sure, I labour but in vain !

MALMESBURY accompanies him to the door, and PITT walks away disquietedly towards Whitehall, the other two regarding him as he goes.

MULGRAVE

Too swiftly he declines to feebleness,
And these things well might shake a stouter
frame !

MALMESBURY

Of late the burden of all Europe's cares,
Of hiring and maintaining half her troops,
His single pair of shoulders has upborne,
Thanks to the obstinacy of the King.—
His thin, strained face, his ready irritation,
Are ominous signs. He may not be for long.

MULGRAVE

He alters fast, indeed,—as do events.

MALMESBURY

His labour's lost ; and all our money gone !
It looks as if this doughty coalition
On which we have lavished so much pay and
pains
Would end in wreck.

MULGRAVE

All is not over yet ;
The gathering Russian forces are unbroke.

MALMESBURY

Well ; we shall see. Should Boney vanquish
these,
And silence all resistance on that side,
His move will then be backward to Boulogne,
And so upon us.

MULGRAVE

Nelson to our defence !

MALMESBURY

Ay ; where is Nelson ? Faith, by this late
time
He may be sodden ; churned in Biscay swirls ;
Or blown to polar bears by south-west gales ;
Or sleeping amorously in some calm cave
On the Canaries' or Atlantis' shore

Upon the bosom of his Dido dear,
For all that we know! Never a sound of
him

Since passing Portland one September day—
To make for Cadiz ; so 'twas then believed.

MULGRAVE

He's staunch. He's watching, or I am much
deceived.

MULGRAVE departs. MALMESBURY goes within. The
scene shuts.

ACT FIFTH

SCENE I

OFF CAPE TRAFALGAR

A bird's-eye view of the sea discloses itself. It is daybreak, and the broad face of the ocean is fringed on its eastern edge by the Cape and the Spanish shore. On the rolling surface immediately beneath the eye, ranged more or less in two parallel lines running north and south, one group from the twain standing off somewhat, are the vessels of the combined French and Spanish navies, whose canvases, as the sun edges upward, shine in its rays like satin.

On the western horizon two columns of ships appear in full sail, small as moths to the aerial vision. They are bearing down towards the combined squadrons.

RECORDING ANGEL I (intoning from his book)

*At last Villeneuve accepts the sea and fate,
Despite the Cadiz council called of late,
Whereat his stoutest captains—men the first
To do all mortals durst—
Willing to sail, and bleed, and bear the worst,
Short of cold suicide, did yet opine*

*That plunging mid those teeth of treble line
In jaws of oaken wood
Held open by the English navarchy
With suasive breadth and artful modesty,
Would smack of purposeless foolhardihood.*

RECORDING ANGEL II

*But word came, writ in mandatory mood,
To put from Cadiz, gain Toulon, and straight
At a said sign on Italy operate.
Moreover that Villeneuve, arrived as planned,
Would find Rosily in supreme command.—
Gloomy Villeneuve grows rash, and, darkly brave,
Leaps to meet war, storm, Nelson—even the
grave.*

SEMICHORUS I OF THE YEARS (aerial music)

*Ere the concussion hurtle, draw abreast
Of the sea.*

SEMICHORUS II

*Where Nelson's hulls are rising from the west,
Silently.*

SEMICHORUS I

*Each linen wing outspread, each man and lad
Sworn to be*

SEMICHORUS II

*Amid the vanmost, or for Death, or glad
Victory!*

The point of sight descends till it is near the deck of the "Bucentaure," the flag-ship of VILLENEUVE. Present thereon are the ADMIRAL, his FLAG-CAPTAIN MAGENDIE, LIEUTENANT DAUDIGNON, other naval officers and seamen.

MAGENDIE

All night we have read their signals in the air,
Whereby the peering frigates of their van
Have told them of our trend.

VILLENEUVE

The enemy
Makes threat as though to throw him on our
stern :
Signal the fleet to wear ; bid Gravina
To come in from manœuvring with his
twelve,
And range himself in line.

Officers murmur.

I say again
Bid Gravina draw hither with his twelve,
And signal all to wear !—and come upon
The larboard tack with every bow anorth !—
So we make Cadiz in the worst event,
And patch our rags up there. As we head now
Our only practicable thoroughfare
Is through Gibraltar Strait—a fatal door !

Signal to close the line and leave no gaps.
Remember, too, what I have already told :
Remind them of it now. They must not
pause

For signallings from me amid a strife
Whose chaos may prevent my clear discern-
ment,

Or may forbid my signalling at all.

The voice of honour then becomes the chief's ;

Listen they thereto, and set every stitch

To heave them on into the fiercest fight.

Now I will sum up all : heed well the charge ;

EACH CAPTAIN, PETTY OFFICER, AND MAN

IS ONLY AT HIS POST WHEN UNDER FIRE.

The ships of the whole fleet turn their bows from south to north as directed, and close up in two parallel curved columns, the concave side of each column being towards the enemy, and the interspaces of the first column being, in general, opposite the hulls of the second. *

AN OFFICER (straining his eyes towards the
English fleet)

How they skip on ! Their overcrowded sails
Bulge like the bladders in a tripe-man's shop
The market-morning after slaughter-day !

PETTY OFFICER (aside)

It's morning before slaughter-day with us,
I make so bold to think !

The English Admiral is seen to be signalling to his fleet. The signal is : "ENGLAND EXPECTS EVERY MAN WILL DO HIS DUTY." A loud cheering from all the English ships comes undulating on the wind when the signal is read.

VILLENEUVE

They are signalling too.—Well, business soon begins !

You will reserve your fire. And be it known
That we display no admirals' flags at all
Until the action's past. 'Twill puzzle them,
And be to our advantage when we close.—
Yes, they are double-ranked, I think, like us ;
But we shall see anon.

MAGENDIE

The foremost one
Makes for the "Santa Ana." In such case
The "Fougueux" might assist her.

VILLENEUVE

Be it so—
There's time enough.—Our ships will be in
place,
And ready to speak back in iron words
When theirs cry Hail ! in the same sort of
voice.

They prepare to receive the northernmost column of the enemy's ships headed by the "Victory," trying the distance by an occasional single shot. During their suspense a discharge is heard southward, and turning they behold COLLINGWOOD at the head of his column in the "Royal Sovereign," just engaging with the Spanish "Santa Ana." Meanwhile the "Victory" draws still

nearer, preserving silence with brazen sang-froid. At a concerted moment full broadsides are discharged into her simultaneously from the "Bucentaure," the "Santísima Trinidad," and the "Redoutable."

When the smoke clears the "Victory's" mizzen-topmast, with spars and a quantity of rigging, is seen to have fallen, her wheel to be shot away, and her deck encumbered with dead and wounded men.

VILLENEUVE

'Tis well ! But see ; their course is undelayed,
And still they near in clenched audacity !

DAUDIGNON

This northmost column bears upon our ship.
Their prows will pierce us beamwards. That's
the aim.

MAGENDIE

Which aim brave Lucas o' the "Redoutable"
Most gallantly bestirs him to outscheme.—
See, how he strains, that on his timbers fall
Blows that were destined for his Admiral !

During this the French ship "Redoutable" is moving forward to interpose itself between the approaching "Victory" and the "Bucentaure."

VILLENEUVE

Now comes it ! The "Santísima Trinidad,"
The old "Redoutable's" hard sides, and ours,
Will take the weight of this bombastic blow.
Your grapnels and your boarding-hatchets—
ready !

We throw our eagle on the English deck,
And swear to fetch it!

CREW

Aye! We swear. Huzza!
Long live the Emperor!

But the "Victory" suddenly swerves to the rear of the "Bucentaure," and crossing her stern-waters, discharges a broadside into her and the "Redoutable" endwise.

The point of view changes.

SCENE II

THE SAME. THE QUARTER-DECK OF THE
"VICTORY"

The van of each division of the English fleet has drawn to the windward side of the combined fleets of the enemy, and broken their order, the "Victory" being now parallel to and alongside the "Redoutable," the "Téméraire" taking up a station on the other side of that ship. The "Bucentaure" and the "Santísima Trinidad" become jammed together a little way ahead. A smoke and din of cannonading prevail, amid which the studding-sail booms are shot away.

NELSON, HARDY, BLACKWOOD, SECRETARY SCOTT, LIEUTENANT PASCO, BURKE the purser, CAPTAIN ADAIR of the Marines, and other officers are on or near the quarter-deck.

NELSON

See, there, that noble fellow Collingwood,
How straight he helms his ship into the
fire!—

Now you'll haste back to yours (to Blackwood).
—We must henceforth

Trust to the Great Disposer of events,
And justice of our cause! . . .

[BLACKWOOD leaves.]

The battle grows hotter. A double-headed shot cuts down seven or eight marines on the "Victory's" poop. Captain Adair, part those marines of yours, And hasten to disperse them round the ship.— Your place is down below, Burke, not up here;

Ah, yes; like David you would see the battle!

A heavy discharge of musket-shot comes from the tops of the "Santísima Trinidad." ADAIR and PASCO fall. Another swathe of marines is mowed down by chain-shot.

SCOTT

My lord, I use to you the utmost prayers
That I have liberty to shape in words :
Remove your stars and orders, I would beg ;
That shot was aimed at you.

NELSON

They were awarded to me as an honour,
And shall I do despite to those who prize me,

And slight their gifts? No, I will die with
them,
If die I must.

He walks up and down with HARDY.

HARDY

At least let's put you on
Your old greatcoat, my lord—(the air is
keen).—
'Twill cover all. So while you still retain
Your dignities, you baulk these deadly aims.

NELSON

Thank 'ee, good friend. But no,—I haven't
time,
I do assure you—not a trice to spare,
As you well see.

A few minutes later Scott falls dead, a bullet having pierced his skull. Immediately after a shot passes between the Admiral and the Captain, tearing the instep of HARDY's shoe, and striking away the buckle. They shake off the dust and splinters scattered over them. NELSON glances round, and perceives what has happened to his secretary.

NELSON

Poor Scott, too, carried off! Warm work
this, Hardy;
Too warm to go on long.

HARDY

I think so, 'too ;
Their lower ports are blocked against our
hull,
And our charge now is less. Each shot so
near
Sets their old wood on fire.

NELSON

Ay, rotten as peat.
What's that? I think she has struck, or
pretty nigh !

A cracking of musketry.

HARDY

Not yet.—Those small-arm men there, in her
tops,
Thin our crew fearfully. Now, too, our guns
Have to be dipped full down, or they would
rake
The "Téméraire" there on the other side.

NELSON

True.—While you deal good measure out to
these,
Keep slapping at those giants over here—
The "Trinidad," I mean, and the "Bucen-
taure,"
To win'ard—swelling up so pompously.

HARDY

I'll see no slackness shall be shown that way.

They part and go in their respective directions. Gunners, naked to the waist and reeking with sweat, are now in swift action on the several decks, and firemen carry buckets of water hither and thither. The killed and wounded thicken around, and are being lifted and examined by the surgeons. NELSON and HARDY meet again.

NELSON

Bid still the firemen bring more bucketfuls,
And dash the water into each new hole
That our shots make in the "Redoutable,"
Or we shall all be set ablaze together.

HARDY

Let me once more advise, entreat, my lord,
That you do not expose yourself so clearly.
Those fellows in the mizzen-top up there
Are peppering round you quite perceptibly.

NELSON

Now, Hardy, don't offend me. They can't
aim ;

They only set their own rent sails on fire.—
But if they could, I would not hide a button
To save ten lives like mine. I have no cause
To prize it, I assure 'ee.—Ah, look there,
One of the women hit,—and badly, too.

Poor wench ! Let some one take her quickly
down.

HARDY

My lord, each humblest sojourner on the seas,
Dock-labourer, lame longshore-man, bowed
bargee,

Sees it as policy to shield his life
For those dependent on him. Much more,
then,

Should one upon whose priceless presence here
Such issues hang, so many strivers lean,
Use average circumspection at an hour
So critical for us all.

NELSON

Ay, ay. Yes, yes ;
I know your meaning, Hardy ; and I know
That you disguise as frigid policy
What really is your honest love of me.
But, faith, I have had my day. My work's
nigh done ;

I serve all interests best by chancing it
Here with the commonest.—Ah, their heavy
guns
Are silenced every one ! Thank God for
that.

HARDY

'Tis so. They only use their small arms now.

He goes to larboard to see what is progressing on
that side between his ship and the " Santísima Trinidad."

L

OFFICER (to a seaman)

Swab down these stairs. The mess of blood
upon 'em

Makes 'em so slippery that one's like to fall
In carrying the wounded men below.

While CAPTAIN HARDY is still a little way off, LORD NELSON turns to walk aft, when a ball from one of the muskets in the mizzen-top of the "Redoutable" enters his left shoulder. He falls upon his face on the deck. HARDY looks round, and sees what has happened.

HARDY (hastily)

Ah—what I feared ! . . .

He goes towards NELSON, who in the meantime has been lifted by SERGEANT-MAJOR SECKER and two seamen.

NELSON

Hardy, I think they've done for me at last !

HARDY

I hope not !

NELSON

Yes. My backbone is shot through.
I have not long to live.

The men proceed to carry him below.

Those tiller ropes
They've shot away, get instantly repaired !

At sight of him borne along wounded there is great agitation among the crew.

Cover my face. There will no good be done
By drawing their attention off to me.

Bear me along, good fellows ; I am but one
Among the many darkened here to-day !

He is carried on to the cockpit over the crowd of
dead and wounded.

(To the Chaplain)

Doctor, I'm gone. I am good for none but
you.

HARDY (remaining behind)

Hills, go to Collingwood and let him know
That we've no Admiral here.

He passes on.

A LIEUTENANT

Now quick and pick him off who did the
deed—

That white-bloused man there in the mizzen-
top.

POLLARD, a midshipman (shooting)

No sooner said than done. A pretty aim !

The Frenchman falls dead upon the poop.

The spectacle seems now to become enveloped in
smoke, and the point of view changes.

SCENE III

THE SAME. ON BOARD THE "BUCENTAURE"

The bowsprit of the French Admiral's ship is stuck fast in the stern-gallery of the "Santísima Trinidad," the starboard side of the "Bucentaure" being shattered by shots from two English three-deckers which are pounding her on that hand. The poop is also reduced to ruin by two other English ships that are attacking her from behind.

On the quarter-deck are ADMIRAL VILLENEUVE, the FLAG-CAPTAIN MAGENDIE, LIEUTENANTS DAUDIGNON, FOURNIER, and others, anxiously occupied. The whole crew is in desperate action of battle and stumbling among the dead and dying, who have fallen too rapidly to be carried below.

VILLENEUVE

We shall be crushed if matters go on
thus.—

Direct the "Trinidad" to let her drive,
That this foul tangle may be loosened clear.

DAUDIGNON

It has been tried, sir ; but she cannot move.

VILLENEUVE

Then signal to the "Hero" that she strive
Once more to drop this way.

MAGENDIE

We may make signs,
But in the thickened air what signal's
marked?—
'Tis done, however.

VILLENEUVE

The "Redoutable"
And "Victory" there,—they grip in dying
throes!
Something's amiss on board the English ship.
Surely the Admiral's fallen?

A PETTY OFFICER

Sir, they say
That he was shot some hour, or half, ago.—
With dandyism raised to godlike pitch
He stalked the deck in all his jewellery,
And so was hit.

MAGENDIE

Then Fortune turns her face!
We have scotched England in dispatching him.
Yes! He commands no more; and Lucas,
seeing,
Is taking steps to board. Look, spars are
laid,
And his best men are mounting at his heels.

A crash is heard.

VILLENEUVE

Ah, God—he is too late! Whence came
that stroke
Of heavy grape? The smoke prevents my
seeing
But at brief whiles.—The boarding band has
fallen,
Fallen almost to a man!—'Twas well assayed.

MAGENDIE

That's from their "Téméraire," whose vicious
broadside
Has cleared poor Lucas' decks.

VILLENEUVE

And Lucas, too.
I see him no more there. His red planks show
Three hundred dead if one. Now for ourselves!

Four of the English three-deckers have gradually closed round the "Bucentaure," whose bowsprit still sticks fast in the gallery of the "Santísima Trinidad." A broadside comes from one of the English, resulting in worse havoc on the "Bucentaure." The main and mizzen masts of the latter fall, and the boats are beaten to pieces. A raking fire of musketry follows from the attacking ships, to which the "Bucentaure" heroically continues still to keep up a reply.

CAPTAIN MAGENDIE falls wounded. His place is taken by LIEUTENANT DAUDIGNON.

VILLENEUVE

Now that the smoke has lessened, hoist the
signals

Upon our only mast, and tell the van

At once to wear, and come into the fire.

(Aside) If it be true that, as *he* sneers, success

Demands of me but cool audacity,

To-day shall leave him nothing to desire !

Musketry continues. DAUDIGNON falls. He is removed, his post being taken by LIEUTENANT FOURNIER. Another crash comes, and the deck is suddenly encumbered with rigging.

FOURNIER

There goes our foremast ! How for signaling now ?

VILLENEUVE

To try that longer, Fournier, is in vain

Upon this haggard, scorched, and ravaged
hulk,

Her decks all reeking with such gory shows,

Her starboard side in rents, her stern nigh
gone !

How does she keep afloat ?—

“Bucentaure,” O unlucky good old ship !

My part in you is played. Ay—I must go ;

I must tempt Fate elsewhere,—if but a boat

Can bear me through this wreckage to the
van.

FOURNIER

Our boats are stove in, or as full of holes
As the cook's skimmer, from their cursèd
balls !

Musketry. VILLENEUVE's Head-of-Staff, DE PRIGNY,
falls wounded, and many additional men. VILLENEUVE
glances troublously from ship to ship of his fleet.

VILLENEUVE

How hideous are the waves, so pure this
dawn !—

Red-frothed ; and friends and foes all mixed
therein.—

Can we in some way hail the "Trinidad"
And get a boat from her ?

They attempt to attract the attention of the
"Santísima Trinidad" by shouting.

Impossible ;
As well try holloing to the antipodes !—
So here I am. The bliss of Nelson's end
Will not be mine ; his full refulgent eve
Becomes my midnight ! Well ; the fleets
shall see
That I can yield my cause with dignity.

The "Bucentaure" strikes her flag.

A boat then puts off from the English ship "Con-
queror," and VILLENEUVE, having surrendered his sword,
is taken out from the "Bucentaure." But being unable

to regain her own ship, the boat is picked up by the "Mars," and the French Admiral is received aboard her.

The point of view changes.

SCENE IV

THE SAME. THE COCKPIT OF THE "VICTORY"

A din of trampling and dragging overhead, which is accompanied by a continuous ground-bass roar from the guns of the warring fleets, culminating at times in loud concussions. The wounded are lying around in rows for treatment, some groaning, some silently dying, some dead. The gloomy atmosphere of the low-beamed deck is pervaded by a thick haze of smoke, powdered wood, and other dust, and is heavy with the fumes of gunpowder and candle-grease, the odour of drugs and cordials, and the smell from abdominal wounds.

NELSON, his face now pinched and wan with suffering, is lying undressed in a midshipman's berth, dimly lit by a lantern. Dr. BEATTY, Dr. MAGRATH, the Rev. Dr. SCOTT the Chaplain, BURKE the Purser, the Steward, and a few others stand around.

MAGRATH (in a low voice)

Poor Ram, and poor Tom Whipple, have just gone.

BEATTY

There was no hope for them.

NELSON (brokenly)

Who have just died?

BEATTY

Two who were badly hit by now, my lord ;
Lieutenant Ram and Mr. Whipple.

NELSON

Ah!—

So many lives—in such a glorious cause. . . .
I join them soon, soon, soon!—O where is
Hardy?

Will nobody bring Hardy to me—none?
He must be killed, too. Surely Hardy's
dead?

A MIDSHIPMAN

He's coming soon, my lord. The constant
call

On his full heed of this most mortal fight
Keeps him from hastening hither as he would.

NELSON

I'll wait, I'll wait. I should have thought
of it.

Presently HARDY comes down. NELSON and he grasp
hands.

Hardy, how goes the day with us and
England?

HARDY

Well; very well, thank God for't, my dear
lord.

Villeneuve their Admiral has this moment
struck,

And put himself aboard the "Conqueror."
Some fourteen of their first-rates, or about,
Thus far we've got. The said "Bucentaure"
chief :

The "Santa Ana," the "Redoutable,"
The "Fougueux," the "Santísima Trinidad,"
"San Augustino," "San Francisco," "Aigle";
And our old "Swiftsure," too, we've grappled
back,

To every seaman's joy. But now their van
Has tacked to bear round on the "Victory"
And crush her by sheer weight of wood and
brass :

Three of our best I am therefore calling up,
And make no doubt of worsting theirs, and
France.

NELSON

That's well. I swore for twenty.—But it's
well.

HARDY

We'll have 'em yet ! But without you, my
lord,

We have to make slow plodding to the deeds
That sprung by inspiration ere you fell ;
And on this ship the more particularly.

NELSON

No, Hardy.—Ever 'twas your settled fault
So modestly to whittle down your worth.
But I saw stuff in you which admirals need
When, taking thought, I chose the “Victory’s”
 keel
To do my business with these Frenchmen in.
A business finished now, for me!—Good
 friend,
Slow shades are creeping on me. . . . I scarce
 see you.

HARDY

The smoke from ships upon our win'ard side,
And the dust raised by their worm-eaten hulks,
When our balls touch 'em, blind the eyes, in
 truth.

NELSON

No ; it is not that dust ; 'tis dust of death
That darkens me.

A shock overhead. HARDY goes up. One or two
other officers go up, and by and by return.

What was that extra noise ?

OFFICER

The “Formidable” passed us by, my lord,
And thumped a stunning broadside into us.—

But, on their side, the "Hero's" captain's
fallen ;

The "Algeciras" has been boarded, too,
By Captain Tyler, and the captain shot :
Admiral Gravina desperately holds out ;
They say he's lost an arm.

NELSON

And we ourselves—
Who have we lost on board here ? Nay, but
tell me !

BEATTY

Besides poor Scott, my lord, and Charles
Adair,
Lieutenant Ram, and Whipple, captain's clerk,
There's Smith, and Palmer, midshipmen, just
killed,
And fifty odd of seamen and marines.

NELSON

Poor youngsters ! Scarred old Nelson joins
you soon.

BEATTY

And wounded : Bligh, lieutenant ; Pasco,
too,
And Reeves, and Peake, lieutenants of marines,
And Rivers, Westphall, Bulkeley, midshipmen,

With, of the crew, a hundred odd just now,
Unreckoning those late fallen not brought
below.

BURKE

That fellow in the mizzen-top, my lord,
Who made it his affair to wing you thus,
We took good care to settle ; and he fell
Like an old rook, smack from his perch,
stone dead.

NELSON

'Twas not worth while !—He was, no doubt,
a man
Who in simplicity and sheer good faith
Strove but to serve his country. Rest be to
him !
And may his wife, his friends, his little ones,
If such he had, be tided through their loss,
And soothed amid the sorrow brought by me.

HARDY re-enters.

Who's that ? Ah—here you come ! How,
Hardy, now ?

HARDY

The Spanish Admiral's rumoured to be
wounded,
We know not with what truth. But, be as
'twill,

He sheers away with all he could call round,
And some few frigates, straight to Cadiz port.

A violent explosion is heard above the confused noises
on deck. A midshipman goes above and returns.

MIDSHIPMAN (in the background)

It is the enemy's first-rate, the "Achille,"
Blown to a thousand atoms!—While on fire,
Before she burst, one of the women there,
Desperate for life, climbed from the gunroom
port

Upon the rudder-chains; pulled off her
clothes,

And swam for the Pickle's boat. Our men
in charge,

Seeing her great breasts bulging on the brine,
Sang out, "A mermaid 'tis, by God!"—
then rowed

And hauled her in.—

BURKE

Such oddities intrude
On death's grim hours!

MIDSHIPMAN

Meantime the "Achille" fought on,
Even while the ship was blazing, knowing
well

The fire must reach their powder; which it
did.

The spot is covered now with floating men,
Some whole, the main in parts ; arms, legs,
trunks, heads,
Bobbing with tons of timber on the waves,
And splinters looped with entrails of the crew.

NELSON (arousing)

Our course will be to anchor. Let them
know.

HARDY

But let me ask, my lord, as I needs must,
Seeing your state, and that our work's not
done,
Shall I, from you, bid Admiral Collingwood
Take full on him the conduct of affairs ?

NELSON (trying to raise himself)

Not while I live, I hope ! No, Hardy ; no.
Give Collingwood my order. Anchor all.

HARDY (hesitating)

You mean the signal's to be made forthwith ?

NELSON

I do !—By God, if but our carpenter
Could rig me up a jury-backbone now,
To last one hour—until the battle's done,
I'd see to it ! But here I am—stove in—

Broken—all logged and done for! Done,
ay done!

BEATTY (returning from the other wounded)

My lord, I must implore you to lie calm!
You shorten what at best may not be long.

NELSON (exhausted)

I know, I know, good Beatty! Thank you well.
Hardy, I was impatient. Now I am still.
Sit here a moment, if you have time to spare?

BEATTY and the others stand back, and the two abide in silence, except for the trampling overhead and the moans from adjoining berths. NELSON is apparently in less pain, seeming to doze.

NELSON (suddenly)

What are you thinking, that you speak no
word?

HARDY (waking from a short reverie)

Thoughts all confused, my lord :—their needs
on deck,

Your own sad state, and your unrivalled past;
Mixed up with flashes of old things afar—

Old childish things at home, down Wessex way,
In the snug village under Blackdon Hill

Where I was born. The tumbling stream,
the garden,

The placid look of the grey dial there,

M

Marking unconsciously this bloody hour,
And the red apples on my father's trees,
Just now full ripe.

NELSON

Ay, thus do little things
Steal into my mind, too. But ah, my heart
Knows not your calm philosophy!—There's
one—

Come nearer to me, Hardy.—One of all,
As you well guess, pervades my memory now ;
She, and my daughter—I speak freely to you.
'Twas good I made that codicil this morning
That you and Blackwood witnessed. Now
she rests

Safe on the nation's honour. . . . Let her have
My hair, and the small treasured things I
owned,

And take care of her, as you care for me !

HARDY promises.

NELSON (resuming in a murmur)

Does love die with our frame's decease, I
wonder,

Or does it live on ever? . . .

A silence. BEATTY reapproaches.

HARDY

Now I'll leave,
See if your order's gone, and then return.

NELSON (symptoms of death beginning to
change his face)

Yes, Hardy ; yes ; I know it. You must
go.—

Here we shall meet no more ; since Heaven
forfend

That care for me should keep you idle now,
When all the ship demands you. Beatty, too,
Go to the others who lie bleeding there ;
Them you can aid. To me you can give
none !

My time here is the briefest.—If I live
But long enough I'll anchor. . . . But—too
late—

My anchoring's elsewhere ordered ! . . . Kiss
me, Hardy :

HARDY bends over him.

I'm satisfied. Thank God, I have done my
duty !

HARDY brushes his eyes with his hand, and withdraws
to go above, pausing to look back before he finally
disappears.

BEATTY (watching Nelson)

Ah.—Hush around ! . . .

He's sinking. It is but a trifle now

Of minutes with him. Stand you, please,
aside,

And give him air.

BEATTY, the Chaplain, MAGRATH, the Steward, and attendants continue to regard NELSON. BEATTY looks at his watch.

BEATTY

Two hours and fifty minutes since he fell,
And now he's going.

They wait. NELSON dies.

CHAPLAIN

Yes. . . . He has homed to where
There's no more sea.

BEATTY

We'll let the Captain know,
Who will confer with Collingwood at once.
I must now turn to these.

He goes to another part of the cockpit, a midshipman ascends to the deck, and the scene overclouds.

CHORUS OF THE PITIES (aerial music)

*His thread was cut too slowly ! When he fell,
And bade his fame farewell,
He might have passed, and shunned his long-
drawn pain,
Endured in vain, in vain !*

SPIRIT OF THE YEARS

*Young Spirits, be not critical of That
Which was before, and shall be after you !*

SPIRIT OF THE PITIES

*But out of tune the Mode and meritless
That quickens sense in shapes whom, thou hast
said,*

*Necessitation sways ! A life there was
Among these self-same frail ones—Sophocles—
Who visioned it too clearly, even the while
He dubbed the Will “the gods.” Truly said
he,*

*“Such gross injustice to their own creation
Burdens the time with mournfulness for us,
And for themselves with shame.”¹—Things
mechanized*

*By coils and pivots set to foreframed codes
Would, in a thorough-sphered melodic rule,
And governance of sweet consistency,
Be cessed no pain, whose burnings would abide
With That Which holds responsibility,
Or inexist.*

CHORUS OF THE PITIES (aerial music)

Yea, yea, yea !

Thus would the Mover pay

The score each puppet owes,

The Reaper reap what his contrivance sows !

Why make Life debtor when it did not buy ?

Why wound so keenly Right that it would die ?

¹ Soph. *Trach.* 1266-72.

SPIRIT OF THE YEARS

*Nay, blame not! For what judgment can ye
blame?—*

*In that immense unweeting Mind is shown
One far above forethinking; purposive,
Yet superconscious; a Clairvoyancy
That knows not what It knows, yet works there-
with.—*

*The cognizance ye mourn, Life's doom to feel,
If I report it meetly, came unmeant,
Emerging with blind gropes from impercipient
By random sequence—luckless, tragic Chance,
If ye will call it so. 'Twas needed not
In the economy of Vitality,
Which might have ever kept a sealed cognition
As doth the Will Itself.*

CHORUS OF THE YEARS (aerial music)

*Yea, yea, yea;
Your hasty judgments stay,
Until the topmost cyme
Have crowned the last entablature of Time.
O heap not blame on that in-brooding Will;
O pause, till all things all their days fulfil!*

SCENE V

LONDON. THE GUILDHALL

A crowd of citizens has gathered outside to watch the carriages as they drive up and deposit guests invited to the Lord Mayor's banquet, for which event the Hall is brilliantly lit up within. A cheer rises when the equipage of any popular personage arrives at the door.

FIRST CITIZEN

Well, well! Nelson is the man who ought to have been banqueted to-night. But he is coming to Town in a coach different from these!

SECOND CITIZEN

Will they bring his poor splintered body home?

FIRST CITIZEN

Yes. They say he's to be tombed in marble, at St. Paul's or Westminster. We shall see him if he laies in state. It will make a patriotic spectacle for a fine day.

Boy

How can you see a dead man, father, after so long?

FIRST CITIZEN

They'll embalm him, my boy, as they did all the great Egyptian admirals.

Boy

His lady will be handy for that, won't she?

FIRST CITIZEN

Don't yeh ask awkward questions.

SECOND CITIZEN

Here's another coming!

FIRST CITIZEN

That's my Lord Chancellor Eldon. Wot he'll say, and wot he'll look!—Mr. Pitt will be here soon.

Boy

I don't like Billy. He killed Uncle John's parrot.

SECOND CITIZEN

How may yeh maike that out, youngster?

Boy

Mr. Pitt maide the war, and the war maide us want sailors; and Uncle John went for a

walk down Wapping High Street to talk to the pretty ladies one evening ; and there was a press all along the river that night—a regular hot one—and Uncle John was carried on board a man-of-war to fight under Nelson ; and nobody minded Uncle John's parrot, and it talked itself to death. So Mr. Pitt killed Uncle John's parrot ; see it, sir ?

SECOND CITIZEN

You had better have a care of this boy, friend. His brain is too precious for the common risks of Cheapside. Not but wot he might as well have said Boney killed the parrot when he was about it. And as for Nelson—who's now sailing shinier seas than ours, if they've rubbed Her off his slate where he's gone to—the French papers say that our loss in him is greater than our gain in ships ; so that logically the victory is theirs. Gad, sir, it's almost true !

A hurrahing is heard from Cheapside, and the crowd in that direction begins to hustle and show excitement.

FIRST CITIZEN

He's coming, he's coming ! Here, let me lift you up, my boy.—Why, they have taken out the horses, as I am man alive !

SECOND CITIZEN

Pitt for ever!—Why, here's a blade opening and shutting his mouth like the rest, but never a sound does he raise!

THIRD CITIZEN

I've not too much breath to carry me through my day's work, so I can't afford to waste it in such luxuries as crying Hurrah to aristocrats. If yeh was ten yards off y'd think I was shouting as loud as any.

SECOND CITIZEN

It's a very mean practice of yeh to husband yourself at such a time, and gape in dumb-show like a frog in Plaistow Marshes.

THIRD CITIZEN

No, sir; it's economy; a very necessary instinct in these days of ghastly taxations to pay half the awmies in Europe! In short, it is scarcely compass-mentass to do otherwise! Somebody must save something, or the country will be as bankrupt as Mr. Pitt himself is, by all account; though he don't look it just now.

PITT's coach passes, drawn by a troop of running men and boys. The Prime Minister is seen within, a thin, erect, up-nosed figure, with a flush of excitement

on his usually pale face. The vehicle reaches the doorway to the Guildhall and halts with a jolt. PITT gets out shakily, and amid cheers enters the building.

FOURTH CITIZEN

Quite a triumphal entry. Such is power ;
Now worshipped, now accursed ! The over-
throw

Of all Pitt's European policy
When his hired army and his chosen general
Surrendered them at Ulm a month ago,
Is now forgotten ! Ay ; this Trafalgar
Will botch up many a ragged old reputé,
Make Nelson figure as domestic saint
No less than country's saviour, Pitt exalt
As zenith-star of England's firmament,
And uncurse all the bogglers of her weal
At this adventurous time.

THIRD CITIZEN

Talk of Pitt being ill. He looks hearty
as a buck.

FIRST CITIZEN

It's the news—no more. His spirits are
up like a rocket for the moment.

Boy

Is it because Trafalgar is near Portingal
that he loves Port wine ?

SECOND CITIZEN

Ah, as I said, friend ; this boy must go home and be carefully put to bed !

FIRST CITIZEN

Well, wotever William's faults, it is a triumph for his virtues to-night !

PITT having disappeared, the Guildhall doors are closed, and the crowd slowly disperses, till in the course of an hour the street shows itself empty and dark, only a few oil lamps burning.

THE SCENE OPENS, revealing the interior of the Guildhall, and the brilliant assembly of City magnates, Lords, and Ministers seated there, Mr. PITT occupying a chair of honour by the Lord Mayor. His health has been proposed as that of the Saviour of England, and drunk with acclamations.

PITT (standing up after repeated calls)

My lords and gentlemen :—You have toasted
me

As one who has saved England and her cause.

I thank you, gentlemen, unfeignedly.

But—no man has saved England, let me say :
England has saved herself, by her exertions :
She will, I trust, save Europe by her example !

Loud applause, during which he sits down, rises, and sits down again. The scene then shuts, and the night without has place.

SPIRIT OF THE YEARS

Those words of this man Pitt—his last large words,

*As I may prophesy—that ring to-night
In their first mintage to the feasters here,
Will spread with ageing, lodge, and crystallize,
And stand embedded in the English tongue
Till it grow thin, outworn, and cease to be.—
So is't ordained by That Which all ordains ;
For words were never winged with apter grace,
Or blent with happier choice of time and place,
To hold the imagination of this strenuous race.*

SCENE VI¹

AN INN AT RENNES

Night. A sleeping-chamber. Two candles are burning near a bed in an alcove, and writing-materials are on the table.

The French admiral, VILLENEUVE, partly undressed, is pacing up and down the room.

VILLENEUVE

These hauntings have at last nigh proved to me
That this thing must be done. Illustrious foe
And teacher, Nelson : blest and over blest
In thy outgoing at the noon of strife
When glory clasped thee round ; while way-
ward Death

¹ This scene is a little advanced in time, to include it in the Act to which it essentially belongs.

Refused my coaxings for the like-timed call !
Yet I did press where thickest missiles fell,
And both by precept and example showed
Where lay the line of duty, patriotism,
And honour, in that combat of despair.

He sees himself in the glass as he passes.

Unfortunate Villeneuve !—whom fate has
marked

To suffer for too firm a faithfulness.—
An Emperor's chide is a command to die.—
By him accursed, forsaken by my friend,
Awhile stern England's prisoner, then un-
loosed

Like some poor dolt unworth captivity,
Time serves me now for ceasing. Why not
cease ? . . .

When, as Shades whisper in the chasmal night,
“Better, far better, no percipience here.”—
O happy lack, that I should have no child
To come into my hideous heritage,
And groan beneath the burden of my name !¹

SPIRIT OF THE YEARS

I'll speak. His mood is ripe for such a parle.

(Sending a voice into VILLENEUVE's ear.)

Thou dost divine the hour !

¹ “Quel bonheur que je n'aie aucun enfant pour recueillir mon horrible héritage et qui soit chargé du poids de mon nom !”—
(Extract from the poignant letter to his wife written on this night.
—See Lanfrey, iii. 374.)

VILLENEUVE

But those stern Nays,
That heretofore were audible to me
At each unhappy time I strove to pass ?

SPIRIT OF THE YEARS

*Have been annulled. The Will grants exit
freely ;
Yea, It says "Now." Therefore make now
thy time.*

SPIRIT OF THE PITIES

*May his sad sunken soul merge into nought
Meekly and gently as a breeze at eve !*

VILLENEUVE

From skies above me and the air around
Those callings which so long have circled me
At last do whisper "Now." Now it shall be !

He seals a letter, and addresses it to his wife ; then takes a dagger from his accoutrements that are hanging alongside, and, lying down upon his back on the bed, stabs himself determinedly in many places, leaving the weapon in the last wound.

Ungrateful master ; generous foes ; Farewell !

VILLENEUVE dies ; and the scene darkens.

SCENE VII

KING GEORGE'S WATERING-PLACE, SOUTH
WESSEX

The interior of the "Old Rooms" Inn. Boatmen and burghers are sitting on settles round the fire, smoking and drinking.

FIRST BURGHER

So they've brought him home at last, hey?
And he's to be solemnized with a roaring
funeral?

FIRST BOATMAN

Yes, thank God. . . . 'Tis better to lie
dry than wet, if canst do it without stinking
on the road gravewards. And they took care
that he shouldn't.

SECOND BOATMAN

'Tis to be at Paul's; so they say that
know. And the crew of the "Victory" have
to walk in front, and Captain Hardy is to
carry his stars and garters on a great velvet
pincushion.

FIRST BURGHER

Where's the Captain now?

SECOND BOATMAN (nodding in the direction of Captain Hardy's house)

Down at home here with his sisters for a bit. I zid en a-walking with them on the Esplanade yesterday. He looks ten years older than 'a did when 'a went. Ay—he brought the galliant hero home!

SECOND BURGHER

Now how did they bring him home so that he could lie in state afterwards to the naked eye?

FIRST BOATMAN

Well, as they always do,—in a cask of sperrits.

SECOND BURGHER

Really, now!

FIRST BOATMAN (lowering his voice)

But what happened was this. They were a long time coming, owing to contrary winds, and the "Victory" being little more than a wreck. And grog ran short, because they'd used near all they had, to peckle his body in. So—they broached the Adm'l!

SECOND BURGHER

How ?

FIRST BOATMAN

Well ; the plain calendar o't is, that when he came to be unhooped, it was found that the crew had drunk him dry. What was the men to do ? Broke down by the battle, and hardly able to keep afloat, 'twas a most defendable thing, and it fairly saved their lives. So he was their salvation after death as he had been in the fight. If he could have knowed it, 'twould have pleased him down to the ground ! How 'a would have laughed through the spigot-hole : " Draw on, my hearties ! Better I shrivel than you famish." Ha-ha !

SECOND BURGHER

It may be defendable afloat ; but it seems queer ashore.

FIRST BOATMAN

Well, that's as I had it from one that knows—Bob Loveday of Overcombe—one of the " Victory " men that's going to walk in the funeral. However, let's touch a livelier string. Peter Green, strike up that new ballet that they've lately had prented

here, and were hawking about town last market-day.

SECOND BOATMAN

With all my heart. Though my wynd-pipe's a bit clogged since the wars hev made beer so mortal small !

SONG

I

In the wild October night-time, when the
wind raved round the land,
And the Back-sea¹ met the Front-sea, and
our doors were blocked with sand,
And we heard the drub of Dead-man's Bay,
where bones of thousands are,
We knew not what the day had done for us
at Trafalgar.

(All) Had done,
Had done,
For us at Trafalgar !

II

"Pull hard, and make the Nothe, or down
we go !" one says, says he.
We pulled ; and bedtime brought the storm ;
but snug at home slept we.

¹ In those days the hind-part of the harbour, adjoining this scene, was so called.

Yet all the while our gallants after fighting
through the day,
Were beating up and down the dark, sou'-
west of Cadiz Bay.

(All) The dark,
The dark,
Sou'-west of Cadiz Bay !

III

The victors and the vanquished then the
storm it tossed and tore,
As hard they strove, those worn-out men,
upon that surly shore ;
Dead Nelson and his half-dead crew, his foes
from near and far,
Were rolled together on the deep that night
at Trafalgar.

(All) The deep,
The deep,
That night at Trafalgar !

The Cloud-curtain draws.

CHORUS OF THE YEARS (aerial music)

*Meanwhile the month moves on to counter-deeds
Vast as the vainest needs,
And fiercely the predestined plot proceeds.*

ACT SIXTH

SCENE I

THE FIELD OF AUSTERLITZ. THE FRENCH
POSITION

The night of the 1st of December, and the eve of the battle. The view is from the elevated position of the Emperor's bivouac. The air is keen and the sky clear, with stars, but the lower levels are covered with a white fog stretching like a sea, from which the heights protrude as dusky rocks.

To the left are discernible high and wooded hills. In the front mid-distance the plateau of Pratzen outstands, declining suddenly on the right to a low flat country covered with marshes and pools now mostly obscured. On the plateau itself are seen innumerable and varying lights, marking the bivouac of the centre divisions of the Austro-Russian army. Close to the foreground the fires of the French are burning, surrounded by soldiery. The invisible presence of the countless thousands of massed humanity that compose the two armies makes itself felt indefinitely.

The tent of NAPOLEON rises nearest at hand, with sentinel and other military figures looming around, and saddled horses held by attendants. The accents of the Emperor are audible, through the canvas from inside, dictating a proclamation.

VOICE OF NAPOLEON

“Soldiers, the hordes of Muscovy now face
you,
To mend the Austrian overthrow at Ulm !
But how so ? Are not these the self-same
bands
You met and swept aside at Hollabrunn,
And whose retreating forms, dismayed to
flight,
Your feet pursued along the trackways here ?
“Our own position, strong and menacing,
Is rich in chance for opportune attack ;
For, say they march to cross and turn our
right—
A course almost their need—their stretching
flank
Will offer us, from points now pre-
arranged——”

VOICE OF A MARSHAL

Shows it, your Majesty, the wariness
That marks your usual far-eyed policy,
To openly announce your tactics thus
Some twelve hours ere their form can
actualize ?

VOICE OF NAPOLEON

The zest such knowledge will impart to all
Is worth the risk of leakages. (To Secretary)
Write on.

(Dictation resumed)

“Soldiers, your columns I myself shall lead ;
But ease your minds who would expostulate
Against my undue rashness. If your zeal
Sow hot confusion in the hostile ranks
As your old manner is, and in our strength
We mingle with our foes, I'll use fit care.
Nevertheless, should issues stand at pause
But for a moment, that time you will see
Your Emperor the foremost in the shock,
Taking his risk with every ranksman here.
For victory, men, must be no thing surmised
As that which may or may not beam on us,
Like noontide sunshine on a dubious morn :
It must be sure !—The honour and the fame
Of France's gay and gallant infantry—
So dear, so cherished all the Empire
through—
Binds us to compass it !

Maintain the ranks ;

Let none be thinned by impulse or excuse
Of bearing back the wounded : and, in fine,
Be every one in this conviction firm :—
That 'tis our sacred bond to overthrow
These hirelings of a country not their own :
Yea, England's hirelings, they !—a realm
stiff-steeled
In deathless hatred of our land and hopes.

“The campaign closes with this victory ;
And we return to find our standards joined

By vast new armies forming now in France.
Forthwith resistless, Peace establish we,
Worthy of you, the nation, and of me.

“NAPOLÉON.”

(To his Marshals)

So shall we prostrate these paid slaves of
hers—
England's, I mean—the root of all the war.

VOICE OF MURAT

The further details sent of Trafalgar
Are not assuring.

VOICE OF LANNES

What may the details be ?

VOICE OF NAPOLÉON (moodily)

We learn that six-and-twenty ships of war,
During the fight and after, struck their flags,
And that the tigerish gale throughout the night
Gave fearful finish to the English rage.
By luck their Nelson's gone, but gone withal
Are twenty thousand prisoners, taken off
To gnaw their finger-nails in British hulks.
Of our vast squadrons of the summer-time
But rags and splintered remnants now
remain.—
Thuswise Villeneuve, poor craven, quitted
him !

Thus are my projects for the navy damned,
And England puffed to yet more bombastry.
—Well, well ; I can't be everywhere. No
matter ;

A victory's brewing here as counterpoise !
These water-rats may paddle in their slush,
And welcome. 'Tis not long they'll have
their way.

Ships can be wrecked by land !

ANOTHER VOICE

And how by land,
Your Majesty, if one may query such ?

VOICE OF NAPOLEON (sardonically)

I'll bid all states of Europe shut their ports
To England's arrogant bottoms, slowly
starve

Her bloated revenues and monstrous trade,
Till all her hulls lie sodden in their docks,
And her grey island eyes in vain shall seek
One jack of hers upon the ocean plains !

VOICE OF SOULT

A few more master-strokes, your Majesty,
Must be dealt hereabout to compass such !

VOICE OF NAPOLEON

God, yes !—Even here Pitt's guineas are the
foes :

'Tis all a duel 'twixt this Pitt and me ;
And, more than Russia's host, and Austria's
too,

I everywhere to-night around me scent
As from an unseen monster haunting nigh
His country's hostile breath !—But come : to
choke it

By our to-morrow's feats, which now, in brief,
I recapitulate.—First Soult will move
To forward the grand project of the day :
Namely : ascend in échelon, right to front,
With Vandamme's men, and those of Saint
Hilaire :

Legrand's division somewhere further back—
Nearly whereat I place my finger here—
To be there reinforced by tirailleurs :
Lannes to the left here, on the Olmütz road,
Supported by Murat's whole cavalry.

While in reserve, here, are the grenadiers
Of Oudinot, the corps of Bernadotte,
Rivaud, Drouet, and the Imperial Guard.

MARSHALS' VOICES

'Tis as we understood, Sire, and have ordered.
Nought lags but day, to light our victory.

VOICE OF NAPOLEON

Now let us up and ride the bivouacs round,
And note positions ere the soldiers sleep.
—Omit not from to-morrow's home dispatch

Direction that this blow of Trafalgar
Be hushed in all the news-sheets sold in France,
Or, if reported, let it be portrayed
As a rash fight whereout we came not worst,
But were so broken by the boisterous eve
That England claims it as her victory.

There emerge from the tent NAPOLÉON and the Marshals, who all mount the horses that are led up, and proceed through the frost and rime towards the bivouacs. At the Emperor's approach to the nearest soldiery they spring up.

SOLDIERS

The Emperor! He's here! The Emperor's here!

AN OLD GRENADIER (approaching Napoléon familiarly)

We'll bring thee Russian guns and flags galore
To celebrate thy coronation-day!

They gather into wisps the straw, hay, and other litter on which they have been lying, and kindling these at the dying fires, wave them as torches. This is repeated as each fire is reached, till the whole French position is one wide illumination. The most enthusiastic of the soldiers follow the Emperor in a throng as he progresses, and his whereabouts in the vast field is denoted by their cries.

CHORUS OF THE PITIES (aerial music)

Strange suasive pull of personality!

CHORUS OF IRONIC SPIRITS

His projects they unknow, his grin unsee !

CHORUS OF THE PITIES

Their loyal luckless hearts say blindly—He !

The night-shades close over.

SCENE II

THE SAME. THE RUSSIAN POSITION

Midnight at the quarters of FIELD-MARSHAL PRINCE KUTÚZOF at Kresnowitz. An inner apartment is discovered, roughly adapted as a council-room. On a table with candles is unfolded a large map of Austerlitz and its environs.

The Generals are assembled in consultation round the table, WEIROTH pointing to the map, LANGERON, BUXHÖDEN, and MILORÁDOVICH standing by, DOKHTÓROF bending over the map, PRSCHEBISZEWSKY¹ indifferently walking up and down. KUTÚZOF, old and weary, with a scarred face and only one eye, is seated in a chair at the head of the table, nodding, waking, and nodding again. Some officers of lower grade are in the background, and horses in waiting are heard hoofing and champing outside.

¹ This General's name should, it is said, be pronounced in three syllables, nearly PRESH-EV'-SKY.

WEIROTHER (referring to memoranda, snuffing the nearest candle, and moving it from place to place on the map as he proceeds importantly)

Now here, our right, along the Olmütz Road
Will march and oust the French division there,
Dislodge them from the Sainton Hill, and thence
Advance direct to Brünn.—You heed me,
sirs?—

The cavalry will occupy the plain :
Our centre and main strength,—you follow
me?—

Count Langeron, Dokhtórof, with Prschebis-
zewsky

And Kollowrath — now on the Pratzen
heights—

Will down and cross the Goldbach rivulet,
Seize Tilnitz, Kobelnitz, and hamlets nigh,
Turn the French right, move onward in their
rear,

Cross Schwarsa, hold the great Vienna road :—
So, with the nightfall, centre, right, and left,
Will rendezvous beneath the walls of Brünn.

LANGERON (taking a pinch of snuff)

Good, General ; very good !—if Bonaparte
Will kindly stand and let you have your way.
But what if he do not !—if he forestall
These sound slow movements, mount the
Pratzen hills

When we descend, fall on *our* rear forthwith,
While we go crying for *his* rear in vain ?

KUTÚZOF (waking up)

Ay, ay, Weirotter ; that's the question—eh ?

WEIROTTER (impatiently)

If Bonaparte had meant to climb up there,
Being one so spry and so determinate,
He would have set about it ere this eve !
He has not troops to do so, sirs, I say.
His utmost strength is forty thousand men.

LANGERON

Then if so weak, how can so wise a brain
Court ruin by abiding calmly here
The impact of a force so large as ours ?
He may be mounting up this very hour !
What think you, General Milorádovich ?

MILORÁDOVICH

I ? What's the use of thinking, when to-
morrow
Will tell us, with no need to think at all !

WEIROTTER

Pah ! At this moment he retires apace.
His fires are dark ; all sounds have ceased
that way
Save voice of owl or mongrel wintering there.

But, were he nigh, these movements I detail
Would knock the bottom from his enterprize.

KUTÚZOF (rising)

Well, well. Now this being ordered, set it
going.

One here shall make fair copies of the notes,
And send them round. Colonel von Toll I ask
To translate part.—Generals, it grows full
late,

And half-a-dozen hours of needed sleep
Will aid us more than maps. We now
disperse,

And luck attend us all. Good-night. Good-
night.

The Generals and other officers go out severally.

Such plans are—paper! Only to-morrow's
light

Reveals the true manœuvre to my sight!

He flaps out with his hand all the candles but one
or two, slowly walks outside the house, and listens.
On the high ground in the direction of the French
lines are heard shouts, and a wide illumination grows
and strengthens; but the hollows are still mantled in
fog.

Are these the signs of regiments out of heart,
And beating backward from an enemy!

[He remains pondering.]

On the Pratzen heights immediately in front there
begins a movement among the Russians, signifying that

the plan which involves desertion of that vantage-ground is about to be put in force. Noises of drunken singing arise from the Russian lines at various points elsewhere.

KURÚZOF re-enters his quarters with a face of mis-giving.

The night shades involve the whole.¹

SCENE III

THE SAME. THE FRENCH POSITION

Shortly before dawn on the morning of the 2nd of December. A white frost and fog still prevail in the low-lying areas ; but overhead the sky is clear. A dead silence reigns.

NAPOLÉON, on a grey horse, closely attended by BERTHIER, and surrounded by MARSHALS SOULT, LANNES, MURAT, and their aides-de-camp, all cloaked, is discernible in the gloom riding down from the high ground before Bellowitz, on which they have bivouacked, to the village of Puntowitz on the Goldbach stream, quite near the front of the Russian position of the day before on the Pratzen crest. The Emperor and his companions come to a pause, look around and upward to the hills, and listen.

NAPOLÉON

Their bivouac fires, that lit the top last night,
Are all extinct.

¹ In depicting this scene, the writer, like others, has followed without question the MS. of Langeron quoted by M. Thiers. But the singular soundness of the Count's own opinion in the consultation, as recorded, suggests that it may have been somewhat strengthened on paper at the expense of that of his companions.

LANNES

And hark you, Sire ; I catch
A sound which, if I err not, means the thing
We have hoped, and hoping, feared fate
would not yield !

NAPOLÉON

My God, it surely is the tramp of horse
And jolt of cannon downward from the hill
Towards our right here, by the swampy lakes
That face Davoust ? Thus, as I sketched,
they work !

MURAT

Yes ! They already move upon Tilnitz.

NAPOLÉON

Leave them alone ! Nor stick nor stone
we'll stir
To interrupt them. Nought that we can
scheme
Will help us like their own stark sightless-
ness !—
Let them get down to those white lowlands
there,
And so far plunge in the level that no skill,
When sudden vision flashes on their fault,
Can help them, though despair-stung, to regain
The key to mastery held at yestereve !

Meantime move onward these divisions here

Under the fog's kind shroud ; descend the
slope,
And cross the stream below the Russian lines :
There halt concealed, till I send down the word.

NAPOLÉON and his staff retire to the hill south-east of
Bellowitz as the day dawns pallidly.

'Tis good to get above that rimy cloak
And into cleaner air. It chilled me through.

When they reach the summit they are over the fog :
and suddenly the sun breaks forth radiantly to the left
of the Pratzen upland, illuminating the ash-hued face of
NAPOLÉON and the faces of those around him. All eyes
are turned first to the sun, and thence to look for the
dense masses of men that had occupied the upland the
night before.

MURAT

I see them not. The plateau seems deserted !

NAPOLÉON (exultantly)

Gone ; verily !—Ah, how much will you give,
An hour hence, for the coign abandoned now !
The battle's ours.—It was, then, their rash
march

Downwards to Tilnitz and the Goldbach
swamps

Before dawn, that we heard.—No hurry,
Lannes !

Enjoy this sun, that rests its chubby jowl
Upon the plain, and thrusts its bristling beard

Across the lowlands' fleecy counterpane,
Peering beneath our broadest hat-brims'
 shade. . . .
Soult, how long hence to win the Pratzen
 top?

SOULT

Some twenty minutes or less, your Majesty :
Our troops down there, still mantled by the
 mist,
Are half upon the way.

NAPOLÉON

Good ! Set forthwith
Vandamme and Saint Hilaire to mount the
 slopes——

Firing begins in the marsh to the right by Tilnitz and
the pools, though the thick air yet hides the operations.

O, there you are, blind boozy Buxhövdén !
Achieve your worst. Davoust will hold you
 firm.

The head of an aide-de-camp rises through the fog
on that side, and he hastens up to NAPOLÉON and his
companions, to whom the officer announces what has
happened. DAVOUST rides off, disappearing legs first into
the white stratum that covers the attack.

Lannes and Murat, you have concern enough
Here on the left, with Prince Bagration
And all the Austro-Russian cavalry.

Haste off. The victory promising to-day
Will, like a thunder-clap, conclude the war !

The Marshals with their aides gallop away towards their respective divisions. Soon the two divisions under SOULT are seen ascending in close column the inclines of the Pratzen height. Thereupon the heads of the Russian centre columns disclose themselves, breaking the sky-line of the summit from the other side, in a desperate attempt to regain the position vacated by the Russian left. A fierce struggle develops there between SOULT's divisions and these, who, despite their tardy attempt to recover the lost post of dominance, are pressed by the French off the slopes into the lowland.

SEMICHORUS I OF THE PITIES (aerial music)

O Great Necessitator, heed us now !

If it indeed must be

That this day Austria smoke with slaughter,
Quicken the issue as Thou knowest how ;
And dull to suffering those whom it befalls
To quit their lodgment in a flesh that galls !

SEMICHORUS II

If it be in the future human story

To lift this man to yet intenser glory,

Let the exploit be done

With the least sting, or none,

To those, his kind, at whose expense such height
is won !

SPIRIT OF THE YEARS

Again ye deprecate the World-Soul's way

That I so long have told ? Then note anew

*(Since ye forget) the ordered potencies,
Nerves, sinews, trajects, eddies, ducts of It
The Eternal Urger, pressing change on change.*

At once, as earlier, a preternatural clearness possesses the atmosphere of the battle-field, in which the scene becomes anatomized and the living masses of humanity transparent. The controlling Immanent Will appears therein, as a brain-like network of currents and ejections, twitching, interpenetrating, entangling, and thrusting hither and thither the human forms.

SEMICHORUS I OF IRONIC SPIRITS (aerial
music)

*O Innocents, can ye forget
That things to be were shaped and set
Ere mortals and this planet met?*

SEMICHORUS II

*Stand ye apostrophizing That
Which, working all, works but thereat
Like some sublime fermenting-vat*

SEMICHORUS I

*Heaving throughout its vast content
With strenuously transmutive bent
Though of its aim unscient ?—*

SEMICHORUS II

*Could ye have seen Its early deeds
Ye would not cry, as one who pleads
For quarter, when a Europe bleeds !*

SEMICHORUS I

*Ere ye, young Pilies, had upgrown
From out the deeps where mortals moan
Against a ruling not their own,*

SEMICHORUS II

*He of the Years beheld, and we,
Creation's prentice artistry
Express in forms that now unbe*

SEMICHORUS I

*Tentative dreams from day to day;
Mangle its types, re-knead the clay
In some more palpitating way;*

SEMICHORUS II

*Beheld the rarest wrecked amain,
Whole nigh-perfected species slain
By those that scarce could boast a brain;*

SEMICHORUS I

*Saw ravage, growth, diminish, add,
Or peoples sane or peoples mad,
In choiceless round of good and bad;*

SEMICHORUS II

*Heard laughter at the ruthless dooms
Which tortured to the eternal glooms
Quick, quivering hearts in hecatombs.*

CHORUS

*Us Ancients, then, it ill befits
To quake when Slaughter's spectre flits
Athwart this field of Austerlitz !*

SHADE OF THE EARTH

*Pain not their young compassions by such lore,
But hold you mute, and read the battle yonder:
The moment marks the day's catastrophe.*

SCENE IV

THE SAME. THE RUSSIAN POSITION

It is about noon, and the vital spectacle is now near the village of Tlinitz. The fog has dispersed, and the sun shines clearly, though without warmth, the ice on the pools gleaming under its radiance.

GENERAL BUXHÖVDEN and his aides-de-camp have reined up, and remain at pause on a hillock. The General watches through a glass his battalions, which are still disputing the village. Suddenly approach down the track from the upland of Pratzen large companies of Russian infantry helter-skelter. COUNT LANGERON is beheld to be retreating with them ; and soon, pale and agitated, he hastens up to GENERAL BUXHÖVDEN, whose face is flushed.

LANGERON

While they're upon us you stay idle here !
Prschebiszewsky's column is distraught and
rent,

And more than half my own made captive !
Yea,
Kreznówitz carried, and Sokólnitz hemmed :
The enemy's whole strength will greet you
soon !

BUXHÖVDEN

You seem to see the enemy everywhere.

LANGERON

You cannot see them, be they here or no !

BUXHÖVDEN

I only wait Prschebiszewsky's nearing corps
To join Dokhtórof's to them. Here they
come.

SOULT, supported by BERNADOTTE and OUDINOT, having cleared and secured the Pratzen height, his battalions are perceived descending from it on this side, behind DOKHTÓROF's division, so placing the latter between themselves and the pools.

LANGERON

You cannot tell the Frenchmen from ourselves !
These are the victors.—Ah—Dokhtórof—
lost !

DOKHTÓROF's troops are seen to be retreating towards the water. The watchers stand in painful tenseness.

BUXHÖVDEN

Dokhtórof tell to save him as he may !
We, Count, must gather up our shaken men
And hurry by the road through Austerlitz.

BUXHÖVDEN's regiments and the remains of LANGERON's are rallied and collected, and they retreat by way of the hamlet of Aujezd. As they go over the summit of a hill BUXHÖVDEN looks back. LANGERON's columns, which were behind his own, have been cut off by VANDAMME's division coming down from the Pratzen plateau. This and some detachments from DOKHTÓROF's column rush towards the Satschan lake and endeavour to cross it on the ice. It cracks beneath their weight. At the same moment NAPOLEÓN and his brilliant staff appear on the top of the Pratzen.

The Emperor watches the scene with a vulpine smile ; and directs a battery near at hand to fire down upon the ice on which the Russians are crossing. A ghastly crash and splashing follows the discharge, the shining surface breaking into pieces like a mirror, which fly in all directions. Two thousand fugitives are engulfed, and their groans of despair reach the ears of the watchers like ironical huzzas.

A general flight of the Russian army from wing to wing is now disclosed, involving in its current the EMPEROR ALEXANDER and the EMPEROR FRANCIS, with the reserve, who are seen towards Austerlitz endeavouring to rally their troops in vain. They are swept along by the disordered soldiery.

SCENE V

THE SAME. NEAR THE WINDMILL OF
PALENY

The mill is about seven miles to the southward, between the French advanced posts and the Austrians.

A bivouac fire is burning. NAPOLÉON, in grey overcoat and beaver hat turned up front and back, rides to the spot with BERTHIER, SAVARY, and his aides, and alights. He walks to and fro complacently, meditating or talking to BERTHIER. Two groups of officers, one from each army, stand in the background on their respective sides.

NAPOLÉON

What's this of Alexander? Weep, did he,
Like his old namesake, but for meaner cause?
Ha, ha!

BERTHIER

'Tis told, your Majesty, that Colonel Toll,
One of Field-Marshal Prince Kutúzof's staff,
In the retreating swirl of overthrow,
Found Alexander seated on a stone
Beneath a leafless roadside apple tree,
Out here by Göding on the Holitsch way;
His coal-black uniform and snowy plume
Unmarked, his face disconsolate, his grey eyes
Mourning in tears the fate of his brave
troops—
All flying southward, save the steadfast slain.

NAPOLÉON

Poor devil !—But he'll soon get over it—
Sooner than his employers oversea !—
Ha !—this will make friend Pitt and England
writhe,
And cloud somewhat their lustrous Trafalgar.

An open carriage approaches from the direction of
Holitsch, accompanied by a small escort of Hungarian
guards. NAPOLÉON walks forward to meet it as it draws
up, and welcomes the Austrian Emperor, who alights.
He is wearing a grey cloak over a white uniform,
carries a light walking-cane, and is attended by PRINCE
JOHN OF LICHTENSTEIN, SWARZENBERG, and others. His
fresh-coloured face contrasts strangely with the bluish
pallor of NAPOLÉON's ; but it is now thin and anxious.

They formally embrace. BERTHIER, PRINCE JOHN,
and the rest retire, and the two Emperors are left by
themselves before the fire.

NAPOLÉON

Here on the roofless ground do I receive
you—
My only mansion for these two months past !

FRANCIS

Your tenancy thereof has brought such fame
That it must needs be one which charms you,
Sire.

NAPOLÉON

Good ! Now this war. It has been forced
on me

Just at a crisis most inopportune,
When all my energies and arms were bent
On teaching England that her watery walls
Are no defence against the wrath of France
Aroused by breach of solemn covenants.

FRANCIS

I had no zeal for violating peace
Till ominous events in Italy
Revealed the gloomy truth that France
aspires
To conquest there, and undue sovereignty.
Since when mine eyes have seen no sign
outheld
To signify a change of purposings.

NAPOLÉON

Yet there were terms distinctly specified
To General Giulay in November past,
Whereon I'd gladly fling the sword aside.
To wit : in order that hot jealousy
Stir us no more anent transalpine rule,
I'd take the Isonzo river as our bounds.

FRANCIS

Roundly, that I cede all.—And how may
stand
Your views as to the Russian forces here?

NAPOLÉON

You have all to lose by that alliance, Sire.
Leave Russia. Let the Emperor Alexander
Make his own terms ; whereof the first must
be

That he retire from Austrian territory.
I'll grant an armistice therefor. Anon
I'll treat with him to weld a lasting peace,
Based on some simple understandings ; chief,
That Russian armies keep to Russian soil,
And that, moreover, every English keel
Be locked out from the ports of his domain.
Meanwhile to you I'll tender this good word :
Keep Austria to herself. To Russia bound,
You pay your own costs with your provinces,
And Alexander's likewise therewithal.

FRANCIS

I see as much, and long have seen it, Sire ;
And standing here the vanquished, let me own
What happier issues might have left unsaid :
Long, long I have lost the wish to bind my-
self

To Russia's purposings and Russia's risks ;
Little do I count these alliances
With Powers that have no substance seizable!

As they converse they walk away.

AN AUSTRIAN OFFICER

O strangest scene of an eventful life,
This junction that I witness here to-day !
An Emperor—in whose majestic veins
Aeneas and the proud Caesarian line
Claim yet to live ; and those scarce less
renowned,
The dauntless Hawks'-Hold Counts, of
gallantry
So great in fame one thousand years ago—
To bend with deference and manners mild
In talk with this adventuring campaigner,
Raised but by pikes above the common herd !

ANOTHER AUSTRIAN OFFICER

Ay ! There be Satschan swamps and Pratzen
heights
In royal lines, as here at Austerlitz.

The Emperors again draw near.

FRANCIS

Then, to this armistice, which shall be called
Immediately at all points, I agree ;
And pledge my word that my august ally
Accept it likewise, and withdraw his force
By daily measured march to his own realm.

NAPOLÉON

For him I take your word. And pray believe
That rank ambitions are your own, not mine ;
That though I have postured as your enemy,
And likewise Alexander's, we are one
In interests, have in all things common cause.

One country sows these mischiefs Europe
through
By her insidious chink of luring ore—
False-featured England, who, to aggrandize
Her name, her influence, and her revenues,
Schemes to impropriate the whole world's
trade,
And starves and bleeds the folk of other
lands.

Her rock-rimmed situation walls her off,
Like a slim selfish mollusk in its shell,
From the wide views and fair fraternities
Which on the mainland we reciprocate,
And spurs her search for profit in our woes.

FRANCIS

I am not competent, your Majesty,
To estimate that country's conscience now,
Nor to engage on my ally's behalf
That English ships be shut from Russian
trade.

But joyful am I that in all things else
My promise can be made ; and that this day
Our conference ends in friendship and esteem.

NAPOLÉON

I will send Savary at to-morrow's blink
And make all lucid to the Emperor.
For us, I wholly can avow as mine
The cordial spirit of your Majesty.

They retire towards the carriage of FRANCIS.
BERTHIER, SAVARY, LICHTENSTEIN, and the suite of officers
advance from the background, and with mutual gestures
of courtesy and amicable leave-takings the two Emperors
part company.

CHORUS OF THE PITIES (aerial music)

*Each for himself, his family, his heirs ;
For the wan weltering nations who concerns,
who cares ?*

CHORUS OF IRONIC SPIRITS

*A pertinent query, in truth !—
But spoil not the sport by your ruth :
'Tis enough to make half
Yonder zodiac laugh
When rulers begin to allude
To their lack of ambition,
And strong opposition
To all but the general good !*

SPIRIT OF THE YEARS

*Hush levities. Events press on. Turn westward.
The curtain of cloud draws slowly across.*

SCENE VI

SHOCKERWICK HOUSE, NEAR BATH

The interior of the Picture Gallery. Enter WILTSHIRE the owner, and PITT, who looks emaciated and walks feebly.

WILTSHIRE (pointing to a portrait)

Now here you have the lady we discussed :
A fine example of his manner, sir ?

PITT

It is a fine example, sir, indeed,—
With that transparency amid the shades,
And those thin blue-green-greyish leafages
Behind the pillar in the background there,
Which seem the leaves themselves.—Ah, this
is Quin.

WILTSHIRE

Yes, Quin. A man of varied parts, though
rough
And choleric at times. Yet, at his best,
As Falstaff, never matched, they say. But I
Had not the fate to see him in the flesh.

P

PITT

Churchill well carves him in his "Characters" :—

"His eyes, in gloomy socket taught to roll,
Proclaimed the sullen habit of his soul.

In fancied scenes, as in Life's real plan,
He could not for a moment sink the man :

Nature, in spite of all his skill, crept in ;
Horatio, Dorax, Falstaff—still 'twas Quin."

—He was at Bath when Gainsborough settled
there

In that house in the Circus which we know.—

I like the portrait much.—The brilliancy
Of Gainsborough lies in this his double sway :
Sovereign of landscape he ; of portraiture
Joint monarch with Sir Joshua.—Ah?—that's
—hark !

Is that the patter of a horse's hoofs
Along the road ?

WILTSHIRE

I notice nothing, sir.

PITT

It is a gallop, growing quite distinct.
And—can it be a messenger for me !

WILTSHIRE

I hope no awkward European news
To stop the honour of this visit, sir !

They listen. The gallop of the horse grows louder, and is checked at the door of the house. There is a hasty knocking, and a courier, splashed with mud from hard riding, is shown into the gallery. He presents a dispatch to PITT, who sits down and hurriedly opens it.

PITT (to himself)

O heavy news indeed! . . . Disastrous; dire!

He appears overcome as he sits, and covers his forehead with his hand.

WILTSHIRE

I trust you are not ill, sir?

PITT

Could I have
A little brandy, sir, quick brought to me?

WILTSHIRE

In one brief minute.

Brandy is brought in, and PITT takes it.

PITT

Now leave me, please, alone. I'll call anon.
Is there a map of Europe handy here?

WILTSHIRE fetches a map from the library, and spreads it before the minister. WILTSHIRE, courier, and servant go out.

O God that I should live to see this day !

He remains awhile in a profound reverie ; then resumes the reading of the dispatch.

“ Defeated—the Allies—quite overthrown
At Austerlitz—last week.”—Where’s Auster-
litz ?

—But what avails it where the place is now ;
What corpse is curious on the longitude
And situation of his cemetery ! . . .
The Austrians and the Russians overcome,
That vast adventuring army is set free
To bend unhindered strength against our
shores. . . .

So do my plans through all these plodding years
Announce them built in vain ! . . .
His heel on Europe, monarchies in chains
To France, I am as though I had not been !

He gloomily ponders the dispatch and the map
some minutes longer. At last he rises with difficulty,
and rings the bell.

A servant enters.

Call up my carriage, please you, now at once ;
And tell your master I return to Bath
This moment.—I may want a little help
In getting to the door here.

SERVANT

Sir, I will,
And summon you my master instantly.

He goes out and re-enters with WILTSHIRE. PITT is assisted from the room.

PITT

Roll up that map. 'Twill not be needed now
These ten years! Realms, laws, peoples,
dynasties,
Are churning to a pulp within the maw
Of empire-making Lust and personal Gain!

[EXEUNT PITT, WILTSHIRE, and servant; and in a few minutes the carriage is heard driving off, and the scene closes.]

SCENE VII

PARIS. A STREET LEADING TO THE
TUILERIES

It is night, and the dim oil lamps reveal a vast concourse of citizens of both sexes around the Palace gates and in the neighbouring thoroughfares.

SPIRIT OF THE YEARS (to the Spirit of
Rumour)

*'Thou may'st descend and join this crowd awhile,
And speak what things shall come into thy
mouth.*

SPIRIT SINISTER

*I'll harken! I wouldn't miss it for the
groans of another Austerlitz!*

The Spirit of Rumour enters on the scene in the disguise of a young foreigner.

SPIRIT (to a street-woman)

Lady, a late hour this to be afoot!

WOMAN

But such is meet in gallant dames like me,
For now He nears!—after a three months’
whirl
Of victories won on fields whose homely
names
Had never swept the ear of mortal man
Beyond the haunts of neighbour peasantry;
But cymballed now by deathless deeds, become
Familiar rhythms in remotest homes!

SPIRIT

*Rare! To it again. I could give heed all
night.*

WOMAN

Poor profit, then, to me from my true trade,
Wherein hot competition is so rife
Already, since these victories brought to town
So many foreign jobbers in my line,
That I’d best hold my tongue from praise of
fame!
However, one is caught by popular zeal,

And though five midnights have not brought
a sou,

I, too, chant *Jubilate* like the rest.—

In courtesies have haughty monarchs vied
Towards the Conqueror ! who, with men-at-
arms

One quarter theirs, has vanquished by his
nerve

Vast musterings four - hundred - thousand
strong,

And given new tactics to the art of war
Unparalleled in Europe's history !

SPIRIT

*What man is this, whose deeds thou blazon'st
so—*

*Who makes the earth to tremble, shakes old
thrones,*

And turns the plains to wilderness ?

WOMAN

Dost ask

As ignorant, yet asking can define ?

What mean you, traveller ?

SPIRIT

*I am a stranger here,
A wandering wight, whose life has not been
spent*

*This side the globe, though I can speak the
tongue.*

WOMAN

Your air has truth in't; but your state is
strange!
Had I a husband he should tackle thee.

SPIRIT

*Dozens thou hast had—batches more than she
Samaria knew, if now thou hast not one!*

WOMAN

Wilt take the situation from this hour?

SPIRIT

*Thou know'st not what thy frailty asks, good
dame!*

WOMAN

Well, learn in small the Emperor's chronicle,
As gleaned from what my soldier-husbands
say:—

Some five-and-forty standards of his foes
Are brought to Paris, borne triumphantly
In proud procession through the surging
streets,

Ever as brands of fame to shine aloft
In dim-lit senate-halls and city aisles.

SPIRIT

*Fair Munich sparkled with festivity
As there he tarried somewhat, and was met
By the gay Joséphine your Empress here.—
There, too, Eugène—*

WOMAN

Napoléon's stepson he——

SPIRIT

*Received for gift the hand of fair Princess
Augusta (daughter of Bavaria's king,
Forced from her plighted troth to Baden's heir),
And, to complete his honouring, was hailed
Successor to the throne of Italy.*

WOMAN

How know you, ere this news has got
abroad?

SPIRIT

*Channels have I the common people lack.—
There, on the nonce, the forenamed Baden prince
Was joined to Stéphanie Beauharnais, her
Who stands as daughter to the man we wait,
Some say as more.*

WOMAN

They do? Then such not I.
Can revolution's dregs so soil thy soul
That thou shouldst doubt the eldest son
thereof?
'Tis dangerous to insinuate nowadays!

SPIRIT

*Right! Lady many-spoused, more charity
Upbrims in thee than in some loftier ones
Who would not name thee with their white-
washed tongues.—
Enough. I am one whom, didst thou know my
name,
Thou would'st not grudge a claim to speak his
mind.*

WOMAN

A thousand pardons, sir.

SPIRIT

*Resume thy tale
If so thou wishest.*

WOMAN

Nay, but you know best——

SPIRIT

*How laurelled progress through applauding
crowds
Have marked his journey home. How Strasburg
town,
Stuttgart, Carlsruhe, acclaimed him like the rest:
How pageantry would here have welcomed him,
Had not his speed outstript intelligence.
—Now will a glimpse of him repay thee.
Hark!*

Shouts arise and increase in the distance, announcing
BONAPARTE's approach.

*Well, Buonaparté has revived by land,
But not by sea. On that thwart element
Never will he incorporate his dream,
And float as master!*

WOMAN

What shall hinder him?

SPIRIT

That which has hereto. England, so to speak.

WOMAN

But she's in straits. She's lost her Nelson
now,
(A worthy man : he loved a woman well !)

George drools and babbles in a darkened
room ;
Her heaven-born minister declines apace ;
All smooths the Emperor's way.

SPIRIT

*Tales have two sides,
Sweet lady. Vamped-up news may reach thee
here.—*

*That Austerlitz was lustrous none denies,
But would it shock thy garrulousness to know
That the true measure of this Trafalgar—
Utter defeat, ay, France's naval death—
Your Emperor bade be hid ?*

WOMAN

*The seer's gift
Has never plenteously endowed me, sir,
As in appearance you. But to plain sense
Things seem as stated.*

SPIRIT

*We'll let seemings be.—
But know, these English take to liquid life
Right patly—nursed therefor in infancy
By rimes and rains which creep into their
blood,
Till like seeks like. The sea is their dry land,
And, as on cobbles you, they wayfare there.*

WOMAN

Heaven prosper, then, their watery way-
farings
If they'll leave us the land!—(The Imperial
carriage appears.) The Emperor!—
Long live the Emperor!—He's the best by
land.

BONAPARTE's carriage arrives, without an escort. The street lamps shine in, and reveal the EMPRESS JOSÉPHINE seated beside him. The plaudits of the people grow boisterous as they hail him Victor of Austerlitz. The more active run after the carriage, which turns in from the Rue St. Honoré to the Carrousel, and thence vanishes into the Court of the Tuileries.

WOMAN

May all success attend his next exploit!

SPIRIT

*Namely: to put the knife in England's trade,
And teach her treaty-manners—if he can!*

WOMAN

I like not your queer knowledge, creepy man.
There's weirdness in your air. I'd call you
ghost
Had not the Goddess Reason laid all such
Past Mother Church's cunning to restore.

—Adieu. I'll not be yours to-night. I'd starve first!

She withdraws. The crowd wastes away, and the Spirit vanishes.

SCENE VIII

PUTNEY. BOWLING GREEN HOUSE

PITT's bedchamber, from the landing without. It is afternoon. At the back of the room as seen through the doorway is a curtained bed, beside which a woman sits, the LADY HESTER STANHOPE. Bending over a table at the front of the room is SIR WALTER FARQUHAR, the physician. PARLOW the footman and another servant are near the door.

TOMLINE, Bishop of Lincoln, enters.

FARQUHAR (in a subdued voice)

I grieve to call your lordship up again,
But symptoms lately have disclosed themselves
That mean the knell to the frail life in him.
And whatsoever things of gravity
It may be needful to communicate,
Let them be spoken now. Time may not
serve
If they be much delayed.

TOMLINE

Ah, stands it thus? . . .
The name of his disease is—Austerlitz!
His brow's inscription has been Austerlitz
From that dire morning in the month just
past
When tongues of rumour twanged the word
across
From its hid nook on the Moravian plains.

FARQUHAR

And yet he might have borne it, had the
weight
Of governmental shackles been unclasped,
Even partly, from his limbs last Lammastide,
When that despairing journey to the King
At Gloucester Lodge by Wessex shore was
made
To beg such. But relief the King refused.
“Why want you Fox? What—Grenville
and his friends?”
He harped. “You are sufficient without
these—
Rather than Fox, why, give me civil war!”
And fibre that would rather snap than shrink
Held out no longer. Now the upshot nears.

LADY HESTER STANHOPE turns her head and comes
forward.

LADY HESTER

I am grateful you are here again, good friend !
He's sleeping at this moment ; but once more
Has asked for tidings of Lord Harrowby,
And murmured of his mission to Berlin
As Europe's forlorn hope ; if, sure, it be
That any hope remain !

TOMLINE

There's no news yet.—
These several days while I have been sitting
by him
He has inquired the quarter of the wind,
And asked me to observe the stable cock.
When I said " East," he answered " That is
well !
Those are the breezes that will speed him
home ! "
So cling his heart-strings to his country's cause.

FARQUHAR

I fear that Wellesley's visit here by now
Gave him too long a strain. He quite broke
down,
And has fast weakened since.

LADY HESTER

Ah ! now he wakes.
Please come and speak to him as you would
wish (to TOMLINE).

LADY HESTER, TOMLINE, and FARQUHAR retire behind the bed, where in a short time voices are heard in prayer. Afterwards the Bishop goes to a writing-table, and LADY HESTER comes to the doorway. Steps are heard on the stairs, and PITT's friend ROSE, the President of the Board of Trade, appears on the landing and makes inquiries.

LADY HESTER (whispering)

He leaves the settlement of his affairs
To his old friend the Bishop. But his words
Bespeak too much anxiety for me,
And underrate his services so far
That he has doubts if his past deeds deserve
Sufficient recognition by the State
To warrant trifling pensions to his kin.
He had been fain to write down his intents,
But the quill dropped from his unmuscled
hand.—

Now his friend Tomline pens what he dictates
As to the items of his last desires.

ROSE and LADY HESTER turn. They see the Bishop bending over the bed with a sheet of paper on which he has previously been writing. A little later he dips a quill and holds it within the bed-curtain, spreading the paper beneath. A thin white hand emerges from behind the curtain and signs the paper. The Bishop beckons forward the two servants, who also sign.

FARQUHAR on one side of the bed, and TOMLINE on the other, are spoken to by the dying man. The Bishop afterwards withdraws from the bed and comes to the landing where the others are.

TOMLINE

A list of his directions has been drawn,
And feeling somewhat more at mental ease
He asks Sir Walter how long he's to live.
Farquhar just answered, in a soothing tone,
That hope still frailly breathed recovery.
At this my dear friend smiled and shook his
head,
As if to say: "I can translate your words,
But I reproach not friendship's lullabies."

ROSE

Rest he required; and rest was not for him.

FARQUHAR comes forward as they wait.

FARQUHAR

His strain of concentration on these things,
Determined now, that long have worried him,
Have left him in a numbing lethargy,
From which I fear he may not rouse to
strength
For speech with us again.

ROSE

But hark. He does.

They listen.

PITT

My country! How I leave my country! . . .

TOMLINE

Ah,—

Immense the matter those poor words contain !

ROSE

Still does his soul stay wrestling with that
theme,
And still it will, even semi-consciously,
Until the drama's done.

They continue to converse by the doorway in
whispers. PIRR sinks slowly into a stupor, from which
he never awakens.

SPIRIT OF THE PITIES (to the Spirit
of the Years)

Do you intend to speak to him ere the close ?

" SPIRIT OF THE YEARS

*Nay, I have spoke too often ! Time and time,
When all Earth's light has lain on the nether
side,
And yapping midnight winds have leapt on
roofs,
And raised for him an evil harlequinade
Of national disasters in long train,
That tortured him with harrowing grimace,
Have I communed with that intelligence.
Now I would leave him to pass out in peace
And seek the silence unperturbedly.*

SPIRIT SINISTER

*Even Its official Spirit can show ruth
At man's fag end, when his destruction's sure !*

SPIRIT OF THE YEARS

*It suits us ill to cavil each with each.
I might retort. I only say to thee
Its slaves we are : Its slaves must ever be !*

CHORUS (aerial music)

*Yea, from the Vague we shape, like these,
And tarry till That please
To null us by Whose stress we emanate.—
Our incorporeal sense,
Our overseeings, our supernal state,
Our readings Why and Whence,
Are but the flower of Man's intelligence ;
And that but an unreckoned incident
Of the all-urging Will, raptly magnipotent.*

A curtain of cloud overdraws.

END OF THE FIRST PART OF 'THE DYNASTS.'

CONTENTS OF SECOND AND THIRD PARTS

(Subject to revision)

PART SECOND

ACT FIRST

- Scene I. The Streets of Berlin.
" II. London.
" III. Jena. The French position.
" IV. The Same. The Prussian Army.
" V. Berlin.
" VI. The Same.

ACT SECOND

- Scene I. King George's Watering-place, South
Wessex.
" II. The Shore of Portugal.
" III. Vimiera.
" IV. Fontainebleau.
" V. Koenigsberg.
" VI. Erfurth.
" VII. The Same.

Scene VIII. The Same.

„ IX. London.

ACT THIRD

Scene I. Road between Bembibre and Lugo.

„ II. Road near Astorga.

„ III. Before Coruña.

„ IV. Valladolid.

„ V. An English Port.

„ VI. Petersburg.

„ VII. Vienna.

ACT FOURTH

Scene I. Road out of Vienna.

„ II. The Field of Wagram.

„ III. The Same.

„ IV. London.

„ V. Talavera.

„ VI. The Same.

ACT FIFTH

Scene I. Schönbrunn.

„ II. Torres Vedras.

„ III. Fontainebleau.

„ IV. Vienna.

„ V. Paris. The Tuileries.

„ VI. London.

„ VII. The Village of Courcelles.

„ VIII. Petersburg.

„ IX. St. Cloud.

CONTENTS

iii

ACT SIXTH

- Scene I. Paris. The Tuileries.
„ II. Albuera.
„ III. London. Carlton House.

PART THIRD

ACT FIRST

- Scene I. Dresden.
„ II. Salamanca.
„ III. Borodino.
„ IV. Moscow.
„ V. The Same.
„ VI. Near Moscow.
„ VII. The Bridge of the Beresina.
„ VIII. An English Town.
„ IX. Paris. The Tuileries.
„ X. Cadiz.

ACT SECOND

- Scene I. The Plain of Vitoria.
„ II. The Same.
„ III. The Same.
„ IV. The Same.
„ V. London. Vauxhall.

ACT THIRD

- Scene I. Vienna.
„ II. London.
„ III. Leipzig.

THE DYNASTS

Scene IV. The Same.

„ V. The Same.

„ VI. London.

„ VII. The Rhine.

„ VIII. Rheims.

„ IX. Paris.

„ X. Fontainebleau.

„ XI. Avignon.

„ XII. Malmaison.

„ XIII. London. The Opera House.

ACT FOURTH

Scene I. Elba. The Quay, Porto Ferrajo.

„ II. Vienna.

„ III. Near Grenoble.

„ IV. London. On 'Change.

„ V. Schönbrunn.

„ VI. London. The House of Commons.

ACT FIFTH

Scene I. The Belgian Frontier.

„ II. A Ballroom at Brussels.

„ III. Charleroi.

„ IV. The Streets of Brussels.

„ V. Ligny.

„ VI. Quatre Bras.

„ VII. Hôtel de Ville, Brussels.

„ VIII. The Road to Waterloo.

ACT SIXTH

Scene I. The Field of Waterloo.

„ II. The Same.

CONTENTS

v

Scene III. The Same.

„ IV. Planchenoit.

„ V. House of the Baron Capellen, Brussels.

„ VI. The Field of Waterloo.

„ VII. The Same.

„ VIII. The Same.

„ IX. The Same.

„ X. Near the Field of Waterloo.

„ XI. London. St. James's Square.

ACT SEVENTH

Scene I. Rochefort.

„ II. A Wessex Village.

After Scene. The Overworld.

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